

Are learning apps speeding up development? **p59**

Televisa takes on transmedia **p29**

An in-depth look at social drivers affecting kids' media habits **p68**

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Cover Our editorial cover features the lead primate (and his pals) and star of new Impossible Pictures/Walker Entertainment/Sparky Animation co-pro *Fleabag Monkeyface*, while international and event copies sport an ad from Zodiak Kids for *Redakai: Conquer the Kairu*.

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In a flap over apps?

When my niece Charlotte was just over a year-old, she came into the possession of her first Tickle Me Elmo. Pressing the toy Muppet's hand, poking his tummy or squeezing his nose would set off an elaborate reaction. Ever the quick study, Charlotte then proceeded to squeeze, poke and stop just short of mauling anything that looked remotely like a stuffed animal only to be disappointed when, well, nothing happened.

times ham-fisted toddler is sitting in front of it. Not surprisingly, there's a lot of noise bubbling up in consumer publications about whether or not iPads/iPhones and their related apps are rearranging children's developmental milestones, perhaps to kids' detriment. For example, is it normal or desirable that a three-year-old can play a round of *Angry Birds* before she can tie her shoelaces or "color" using an iPad's surface before she can grip a crayon?

I think what's driving much of the rising disquiet is the fact that many adults still can't comprehend how quickly children take to technology, despite all that's been written about this generation being digital natives. Moreover, many may not be looking at how young children's interactions with these digital devices are helping to build their motor and analytical skills—something our Senior Writer Wendy Goldman Getzler has aptly done in her "Wired to learn" feature (p.59) in this issue.

Certainly, I agree with one of her interviewees, Gary Pope at Kids Industries, that no amount of playing around with an iPad will help a two-year-old develop the motor skills required to, say, pilot a moving vehicle or more realistically tie his shoes before age five. However, if created to meet the burgeoning needs of kids at key stages of their development, I don't see why parents wouldn't welcome the apps into their kids' lives. The challenge for the industry then is to think before it apps and make sure the digital games and other activities it produces are meeting the needs of their intended targets.

Cheers,
Lana



The crocodile tears that may or may not have been shed upon making that disappointing discovery aside, Charlotte was just doing what came naturally to her at that stage of her development. And her curiosity-driven pursuits were made all the easier through immediately rewarded movements that didn't require the use of fine motor skills she simply did not possess. Fast-forward six years, and I'm sure you could substitute the word iPad for Elmo in this scenario.

Much like the scores of tech-enhanced toys currently on the market, the iPad is very easy to use. A swipe here, a poke there and things just start happening on-screen, even when an often-

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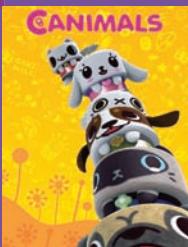


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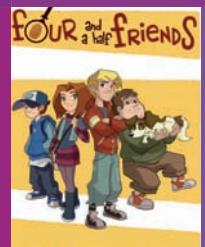
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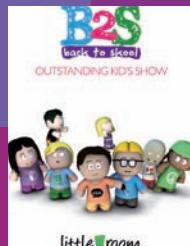
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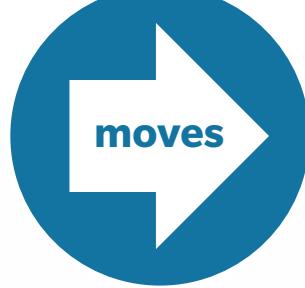


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Mola Noguru (52 x 11')
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www.zinkia.com





The List

Five things on our radar this month

1 Tablets: Take two

Released in March, Apple's second incarnation of the game-changing iPad is lighter, 33% thinner, faster and supports multiple cameras. And with Samsung launching its latest Android tablet this month, all signs point to even greater options and usability for kids. App developers, on your marks, get set, GO!



2 Bye-bye Barbie

Barbie got her elaborate 38,000-square-foot dream house in 2009. But the visually stunning, cutting-edge retail outlet in Shanghai was shuttered last month. Owner Mattel joins a growing list of US retailers—including Best Buy—that have pulled out of China recently, indicating that engaging the Chinese middle-class consumer presents a bigger hurdle than the Great Wall.



Capcom Interactive, Inc.
2. Smurfs' Village

★★★★★ 12830 Ratings



Pocket Gems, Inc.
3. Tap Zoo

★★★★★ 59031 Ratings



The Playforge, LLC
4. Zombie Farm

★★★★★ 8736 Ratings

3 Price check

It's all fun and games until someone gets the bill. In response to kids racking up real costs with virtual buys, the American FTC is reviewing Apple's in-app purchasing system and pondering new subscription rules. For parents who haven't made use of existing parental controls, little fingers can buy a lot of virtual goodies with Apple's 15-minute window of password-enabled purchase time.



4 Box-office breakthrough?

Who would have thought that two brand-new non-Pixar or DreamWorks properties would be ruling the 2011 kids box office? Paramount's *Rango* and *Gnomeo & Juliet*, produced by Elton John's Rocket Pictures, are doing just that to the tune of a combined US\$160 million and counting.



5 Broadband battles

It looks like online movie-rental service Netflix is going to have some trouble holding on to its top spot in the US digital market. Innovative video distribution collaborations like last month's Warner Bros./Facebook hookup are bound to corner some marketshare—and inspire more copycats.



To keep up with the news as it happens, check out kidscreen.com daily.



With a Harvard MBA in hand, **Doug Murphy** thought he would end up on Wall Street. But an offer from the House of Mouse put him on the path to kids entertainment. Two decades later, he admits this business is still where his heart is because “it’s where I grew up.”

Growing up globally

The gig President of Corus Television, overseeing the Canadian media giant’s kidnets—YTV, Treehouse, Nickelodeon Canada, 50% stakes in animation nets Teletoon and Teletoon Retro and commercial arm Nelvana—women-centric channels W Network, OWN, Cosmopolitan TV, VIVA and W Movies, and CMT (Canada), Sundance Channel (Canada) and HBO Canada.

The Disney decade A Canadian native, born and raised in the province of Ontario, Murphy found the combined lure of a post-MBA offer from Disney and the chance to move to sunny California too great to resist. He spent exactly 10 years working principally on operating Disney’s retail stores, and says while his time at Harvard provided an outstanding education, his Disney decade was absolutely essential for his career. “I got completely brainwashed by the Mouse,” he says. “I learned from the inside out how to manage brands. I learned so much, and continue to draw on it and my network of Disney alumni. It’s phenomenal.” In fact, one of his biggest learning experiences came from a three-year stint heading up the Disney Stores in Japan. Not only has he tapped into contacts made there to advance Nelvana’s business (think Bakugan and Beyblade) over the past eight years, but it also served as the ultimate training ground for conducting international business and succeeding in new environments. “If you can be successful in Japan culturally, you can be successful anywhere.” Murphy also picked up a fondness for karaoke and says he does a pretty mean Ray Charles tribute when called upon.

From retail to ratings After leaving Disney, Murphy took a year-long break, even traveling to Tahiti for a bit of snorkeling and relaxation. But when he got the call from Corus CEO John Casaday to head up international TV sales for Nelvana Enterprises, he bit. Viewing it as perhaps one of his only chances to return to Canada (Murphy still plays hockey every week!) and perform a job global in scope, he wanted to pursue the opportunity. The catch was Murphy knew “nothing about making and selling TV shows or networks and ratings.” But brand building, that was something he knew inside and out, and he proceeded to grow Nelvana’s commercial prospects.

The bucket list Eight years, and several promotions later, Murphy splits his days “bouncing between the three buckets” of the Corus TV biz—premium pay-TV channels, women’s networks and kids. “The level of complexity in the kids business is what I enjoy about it,” he admits. “It’s like a complicated Rubik’s Cube of value creation. Finding the right commercial property and then cobbling together the right partners...every deal is different and an opportunity.” —Lana Castleman

Out of Office
Tales from the frequent fliers club



Ed Galton
CCO and MD, Cake Entertainment

1. In my carry-on

You’ll find Bose noise-cancelling headphones for watching movies, an iPad to play scrabble and a golf magazine to read.



2. Go-to gadget

The Bose headphones. I can switch off and I am in my own little world.

3. On the fly

Always ask for an upgrade. The key is to always be polite to all airline employees and flirt a little—it just happens!

4. Preferred in-air tunes

Bob Marley and The Wailers.



5. Best in-flight food
Singapore Airlines.

6. Best power-lunch
I don’t power-lunch.

7. Window or aisle?
Aisle—I like to get up and move around.

The BIG idea Where's your next creative breakthrough coming from?



Call it the YouTube effect. Could the advent of online video-sharing be placed alongside the arrival of the Guttenberg press as a great innovation in human creativity? Chris Anderson, curator at think tank TED, believes so. In a TED Talk late last year, he spoke on the topic and noted that when videos of the series were made available online (ted.com/talks) “an upward spiral of improvement was taking place” in the talks themselves. He goes on to state that once people began watching other presentations; their own speeches became more visual, concise and generally better. It turns out seeing is believing—and sharing breeds creativity. The message to anyone interested in creative breakthroughs is clear—don’t try to conceive of new ideas in a vacuum, collaboration leads to inspiration.

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Video: Meet Liz Gottrell, a volcanologist at the Smithsonian. She'll talk to you LIVE on Thursday.

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Current Mission

MISSION BRIEFING

MISSING: We are unsure what's causing these alarming anomalies. Is there some vital piece of information we're missing? We need your help to investigate further.

LATEST BROADCAST

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Plus, we've got a new data challenge. Get your cameras and hit the park, sidewalk or backyard! Document any animals you can find and share them with us. You can upload your data until April 22.

NEWS FLASHES

Two New Documents Unlocked! Read them here, then join the discussion and help us figure out what they mean.

Latest Journal Entry Revealed. Read it here and help us figure out what museum we're going to next!

Code Breakers Needed! Help us decrypt these strange forum posts!

Toolbox

Events

DECEMBER	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	29	30	31				

User Achievements

User	Number
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KatrinKing	7
FrancesBig	2
Sam-Meister	23

Poll

How many hours a week do you spend on Vanished?

0 to 1 hours
 1 to 2 hours
 2 to 3 hours
 3 to 5 hours
 5 or more hours
 I don't play

(Vote!)

On the circuit

Notes for the industry travel diary

June 6-11

Annecy
Annecy, France



www.annecy.org

With 50 years now behind it, Annecy has become a must-do European animation festival. The week-long event includes more than 600 screenings of features, short films, projects from burgeoning animation students, sneak previews and works in progress. Meanwhile, a lovely walk beside the picturesque Lac d'Annecy takes you to Mifa (International Animation Film Market) at the L'Imperial Palace that hosts 450 exhibitors, 2,300 delegates and 200 buyers from 70 countries.

June 7-9

E3 Expo
Los Angeles



www.E3Expo.com

The world's premiere trade show for computer and video games, E3 is the place to be for everything gaming. Thousands of professionals from all over the world, including developers, retailers, programmers, distributors, manufacturers and a healthy dose of geeks, will swarm the Los Angeles Convention Center to see what the near future holds in interactive entertainment.

June 14-16

Licensing Show
Las Vegas



www.licensingexpo.com

More than 18,000 attendees from close to 100 countries will make their way to America's playground in mid-June for Licensing Show. Licensors, retailers, manufacturers, brand owners and marketers will descend on the desert, setting their sights on finding the hottest new properties, trends and licensing deals. While the glitz and glam of the boulevard strip is alluring, we also recommend hitting up the Double Down Saloon during your off time. Now that's Vegas, baby!

Digging deeper

Tapping into kid interest in series like *CSI*, the Smithsonian and MIT create groundbreaking game

With a grant from the US government's National Science Foundation, renowned university the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and The Smithsonian Institution have developed *Vanished*, a large-scale online/offline collaborative game that begins its eight-week pilot run this month.

"We are thinking of it as a 'curatorial' game," says Scot Osterweil, creative director of MIT's Education Arcade. "We really see the popularity of TV series like *CSI* and *Bones* as evidence that there is a hunger for this kind of problem-solving, and it's not being met by the science taught in schools."

The free game, aimed at an 11 to 14 demo, revolves around a website where participants log in and become investigators tasked with tracing the origins of an environmental disaster that may or may not be supernatural in nature. MIT professors and other experts are making themselves available online to assist participants in the course of their research, and more than 15 museums across the US will be linked into the game, offering exhibits and information to further the understanding of key topics.

"Kids will spend their time in three ways—at the museum, doing offline research and collaborating with other participants on our online forum," says Osterweil.

Organizers are hoping to attract 25,000 kids to the initial program, with an outreach campaign promoting the website (vanished.mit.edu) through the museums and various media outlets.

Caitlin Feeley, project manager at MIT's Education Arcade, says the game will be unlike other online or computer games because of the real-world applications and collaborative nature of the program.

"In this case, a participant isn't taking on the role of a character—kids play as themselves and we present them with an elaborate puzzle that they have to solve over eight weeks," she says. "In a way, it will be like [TV series] *Lost* in that there are a series of clues that reveal themselves gradually."

Ultimately, adds Osterweil, the main goal of the program is to promote science education—a topic he feels has often been misunderstood by students. "We are trying to get kids to understand that the kinds of problem-solving that they do while they play games is actually exactly what scientist do," he says. "Science isn't about knowing a bunch of facts; it's about problem-solving."

While the game will wrap up in two months, Feeley says that the entire program was built using open-source code that will be made public once the game ends to allow other educational institutions to use the concept's architecture. Additionally, she says there is potential for the program to be adapted for commercial interests. "We have already had some talks," she says. "There is nothing to prevent a similar game of this scope being created using private funding with tie-ins to popular media in the future." —Gary Rusak

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HotStuff

Hooked on toons

Book illustrator **Noah Jones** lured by Disney to create original series



Who Children's book illustrator Noah Jones, who received an out-of-the-blue call from a Disney Channel exec a few years ago that led to the creation of the new toon *Fish Hooks*.

You might recognize Jones's past illustration work for Boston's Candlewick Press, including picture books *Dance With Me*, *Not Norman: A Goldfish Story* and *Those Shoes*.

Creative track Jones brought at least five ideas to the table when he was invited to pitch Disney Channel higher ups, who were intrigued by his character design, and *Fish Hooks* emerged as the winner. The comedy series for five- to seven-year-olds takes place inside a giant fish tank at a pet store, where BFFs (best fish friends) Bea, Milo and Oscar experience typical teenage ups and downs. Friendship, dating and school butt up against goings on at the pet shop—think giant lobster attacks—to drive a lot of the humor. The comedy is further reinforced by a quirky design that uses a mix of digital animation and photo-real collage.

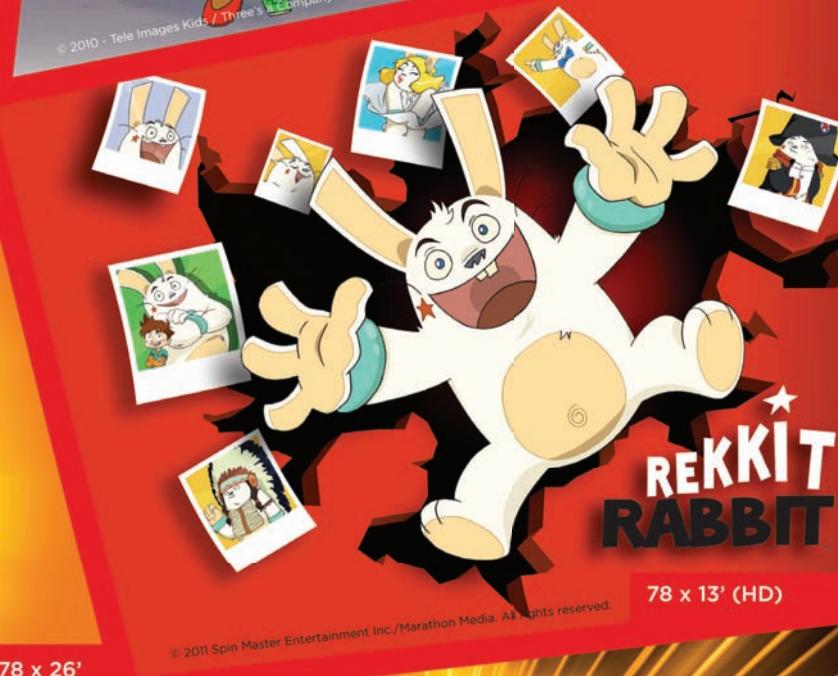
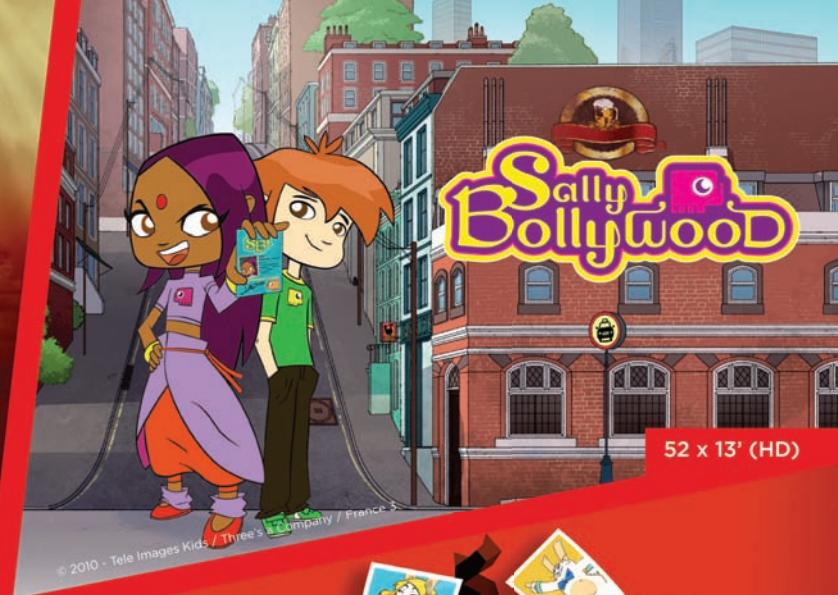
Making it work Disney assembled a team of writers to flesh out eps and teamed TV newbie Jones with executive producer Maxwell Atoms, creator of Cartoon Network series *The Grim Adventures of Billy & Mandy* and *Evil Con Carne*.

One of the key things he's learned, notes Jones, is the importance of balancing wacky humor with a lot of heart and emotion that doesn't come across as sappy. So having sweet moments between Bea and Milo sets up their relationship in a very real way. "That's Maxwell's influence," says Jones. "He's also great at finding what is funny visually and bringing it out of a story."

Next moves Along with producing the series, Jones also took a turn in the recording studio. "I play Bea's dad and I actually had to try out for it!" he says. Oh, and then there's the early greenlight. *Fish Hooks* launched on Disney Channel US this past fall and is being rolled out across the net's global channels this year. It's been re-commissioned, so Jones is up to his ears in pre-production for season two. —Kate Calder

Fish Hooks producers
Noah Jones (left) and
Maxwell Atoms





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In a first for the two-year-old channel and brand, Disney XD has a GM in **David Levine [A]**. The former VP of worldwide programming strategy, acquisitions and co-productions for Disney Channels Worldwide will now be looking after the strategic direction of the tween-boy-targeted channel on a global basis. Additionally, a VP of programming title has been tacked on to his new remit, so Levine

to lead Disney's development and production of content for kids ages two to seven, broadening her remit to include strategic direction of DJ. Kanter's so far helmed *Mickey Mouse Clubhouse*, *Handy Manny* and *Imagination Movers*, and facilitated the creation of a global development and production hub for Playhouse Disney in London.

Speaking of new TV ventures, two-year-old L.A.-based Hasbro Studios

named the former heads of both units to lead the revamped structure. **Mike Vogel [B]** moves up to VP of development for boys, action, girls and preschool programming from executive director of boys and action. Former SVP of girls and preschool programming **Linda Steiner**, meanwhile, has been upped to SVP of current programming, where she will manage studio-produced series once they are

Margie Chan-Yip to VP of global publishing, where she will create new ways to develop Hasbro brands into traditional print and eBook formats.

Focusing his attention on all things digital is **John Zuur Platten [C]**, the new director of digital media at L.A.-based Rubicon Studios. The home to four-time Kidscreen Awards winner *Pink Panther & Pals* recently appointed the writer/producer to develop

Former FME director of interactive **Oliver Delfosse** also gets a bump to VP of interactive, mobile and digital content to move the company further into the gaming space, including social media gaming. In terms of new blood, Brand LLC licensing manager **Dhivyah Ramanath** joins the company as senior manager of consumer products, softlines to grow FME's apparel, accessory and publishing businesses.

people



A



B



C



D



E

will be working on original content development and acquisitions. And as Disney Junior starts its international rollout (Playhouse Disney Canada is relaunching as DJ next month), Disney Channels Worldwide has made it official, promoting **Nancy Kanter** to GM of the new global preschool brand and channel. Kanter will continue

has restructured its creative teams in an effort to keep up with increased production output for stateside JV-channel The Hub and international markets. Re-streaming its individual boys action and girls/preschool creative teams into separate Series Development and Current Programming groups, the studio has

on the air. VP of production **Kathy Page** now leads an expanded team to support the restructured departments while continuing to assist in oversight of outside production-services relationships.

Hasbro's Global Brand Licensing & Publishing division, meanwhile, has appointed former Disney exec

its library of entertainment properties for gaming, app, web content, social media and digital distribution platforms. Developing casual games and apps is Platten's priority.

On the consumer products front, the lead-in to Licensing Show continues. For one, FremantleMedia Enterprises North America has revamped its entire exec lineup. With a focus on expanding its third-party brand representation, children's programming and brand development, live events, digital content creation and gaming initiatives, the house of American Idol has moved **David Luner [D]** from SVP of consumer products and interactive into the post of EVP of consumer products, interactive and mobile. Along with repping FME's TV brands and current third-party brands (i.e. Rebecca Bonbon), Luner will manage a slate of new children's content, licensed and original game brands, and the digital content development division.

At Nickelodeon Consumer Products International **Tanya Visano [E]** is all set to find out that snow is not an uncommon occurrence in April in Toronto, as she settles into the newly created role of senior director of Nickelodeon Consumer Products Canada. The former Montreal-based Mega Brands sales exec is now responsible for the strategic development of agency, licensee and retailer relationships and will be working with Nick's exclusive licensing agent in the territory, Studio Licensing owned by dynamic married duo Robert and Debbie Miller.

In London, NCPI has given its retail ops a boost with **Mark Kingston** taking on the newly created position of VP of Europe licensing, retail sales and trade marketing. Additionally, **Jason Easy** has been named senior retail manager for the UK, and **Jeremy Poreca** is now director of international retail development.

3 Things You don't know about... Paul Robinson MD, KidsCo



1. I am able to walk on red-hot coals

without feeling any pain whatsoever—I was dared to do it for a charity event and have repeated the experience several times—apparently I have very few nerve endings in the bottom of my feet.

2. I am a huge fan of Star Trek

and watched the original series when it aired in the 1960s. My guilty secret is that I have a Starfleet costume, which occasionally comes out at parties.

3. I used to be a nightclub DJ

and held several residencies at clubs across the UK including the famous Hippodrome in London's Leicester Square.



For more People Moves, head over to kidscreen.com/category/people-moves

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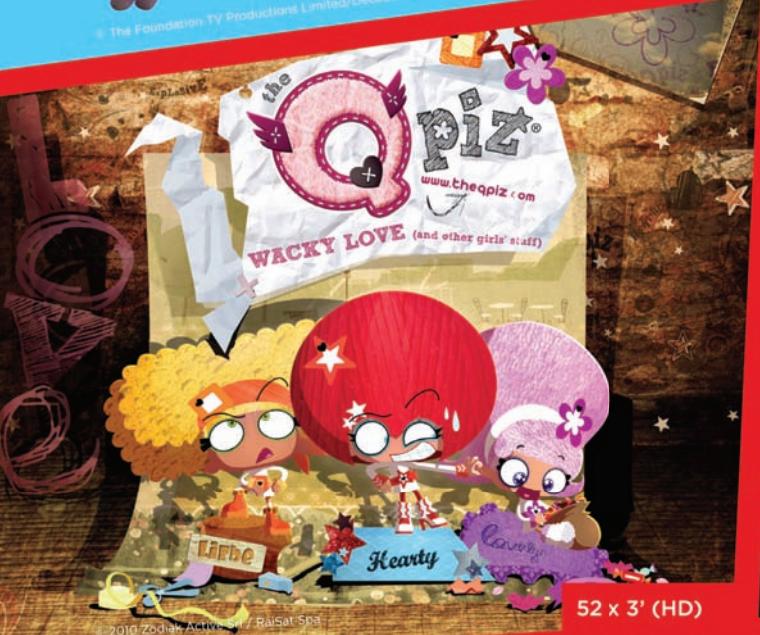
150 x 19' (HD)

© The Foundation TV Productions Limited/Decode/Blue Entertainment 2011



53 x 22' (HD)

Yo Gabba Gabba! TM & © 2011 GabbaCaDabba LLC



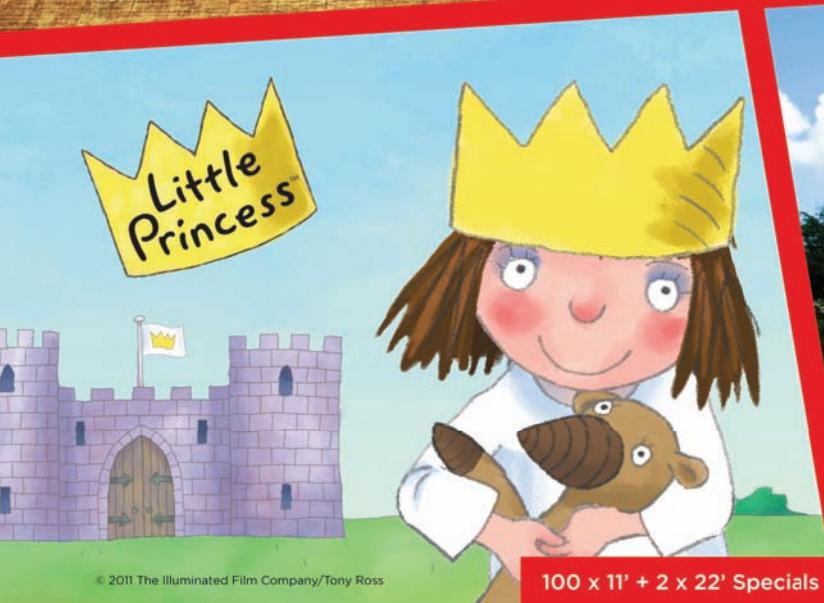
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Across the universe

Latin American broadcast giant Televisa takes on transmedia

BY KATE CALDER



El Chavo TM logo and characters are trademarks of
Roberto Gomez Bolaños © all rights reserved 2004-2011.

Homegrown property El Chavo—with an animated series, stage production (shown above), publishing and merchandise behind it—already has a strong transmedia foundation

M

Mexico City-based Televisa has created a new transmedia department to integrate content across its many platforms that include online, magazine publishing, film production and live events. With four free-to-air terrestrial channels in Mexico and pay-TV channels on Televisa Network and Univision in the US, the multi-media conglomerate airs more than 70,000 hours of programming per year.

At press time, Lenny Altschuler was only one month into his role at the helm of the newly formed transmedia department. It's now one of the few divisions that spans the entire company to promote content, build and protect corporate brands, and develop new ones. "Our digital area has to work together with communications and publicity, which has to work together with the producer of a show and with sales and marketing to be able to address audience demands for a richer experience," says Altschuler.

After attending a talk on transmedia last year, Altschuler decided to put together a presentation that spelled out the importance of leveraging multiple screens, platforms and social networks. His pitch resonated with the higher-ups at Televisa and they entrusted him with leading a transmedia movement at the company. Part of that decision, he explains, involved recognizing that a cultural shift in media consumption now demands reaching viewers across platforms in a very integrated way, and that online traffic is just as important as ratings.

"We saw the need for expanding content beyond the main TV platform," says Altschuler. "It's not replicating, but rather expanding the storylines." He explains that the goal is to develop all-new content from its inception with a transmedia plan. Be it a telenovela, a children's series, an annual charity telethon or a broadcast sporting event, the transmedia department will support and guide producers in creating content for all platforms. So far, he's chock-full of ideas that range from setting up an interactive Twitter platform at sporting events during game time, to publishing magazine columns written from the point of view of popular telenovela characters.

New kids content coming

Altschuler says that incorporating transmedia strategies into children's content at Televisa will be an ongoing goal in the months ahead as it works on a revamp of its kids division. Currently, children's programming airs on Televisa's Channel 5, but Altschuler says original content is limited and the slate includes a lot of Spanish-dubbed acquisitions. Top performers include *Plaza Sésamo*, co-produced with Sesame Workshop, and *SpongeBob SquarePants*.

Though plans for reinventing Televisa Kids are still in the works, Altschuler says the broadcaster is committed to building transmedia experiences for children via on-air and online video screening, as well as through gaming and educational content. "There are new ways to teach and complement schools with interactive tools and features in an entertaining way," he explains.

El Chavo reborn

The first kid-oriented project Altschuler plans to launch into the transmedia realm is the famous Mexican evergreen



Televisa Kids is being revamped, but co-pro *Plaza Sésamo* continues to be a network staple

property *El Chavo*. The latest on-air iteration of the brand is *El Chavo del 8*, an animated series now in its fourth season on Televisa, based on a popular 70s live-action sitcom about the adventures and tribulations of orphan *El Chavo* and his apartment-building neighbors. Although it originated in Mexico, the property has cultural roots throughout Latin America and has proliferated on different platforms including books, comics, ancillary merch and live stage shows.

On deck for this summer, Televisa will be focusing on the release of *El Chavo* video games for Nintendo consoles, as well as content on digital platforms such as mobile and iTunes. A fifth season of *El Chavo del 8*, which now boasts 110 eps, is currently in production and on-track to air in October. The series will continue to be produced at a pace of one new season per year.

"We have an opportunity this year to bring all of these elements together and create a unified experience," says Altschuler. He adds that *El Chavo* was the most logical property to start with, not just because of the existing content and popularity, but because of its commercial attractiveness to clients.

Crossing demographics

This month Altschuler also plans to start development on a transmedia telenovela pilot. He wants to put a multi-touchpoint spin on the genre that is traditionally aimed at women over 40 to bring in other demos including kids.

"It will be a telenovela that is not just transmedia, but trans-audience," says Altschuler. So choosing one of the three telenovelas that Televisa has greenlit, he will move its storylines and various characters across content tailored specifically to reach older kid viewers. For example, he explains, one of the telenovela's young characters could get their own TV series or online video blogs to tell a new story. And the kid content would have the potential to be woven into Televisa's children's programming both on-air and online and across all platforms. **K**

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Driving digital Down Under

New leadership takes the reigns at Nick Australia and New Zealand

The challenge With the mid-2010 departure of kids broadcasting industry vet Deirdre Brennan, Nickelodeon Australia and New Zealand went on the hunt for a new programming director who could amp up the net's competitive edge in Australia's digitally savvy marketplace.

The plan Hugh Baldwin assumed the newly created role of director of television and digital content for Nickelodeon Australia and New Zealand in early February, moving over from his previous post as digital media director and effectively merging the two departments. Now, as well as managing programming and digital efforts, Baldwin is also directly involved with MTVN1 initiatives involving its international digital and programming groups.

"When Deirdre Brennan left, we talked about the opportunity to look at doing things slightly differently," says Baldwin. "That was about bringing all the platforms together in terms of content output, where TV is still the centerpiece of the table." He explains that his mission will be to shift how the two departments work internally and then eventually let the audience drive the content.

The programming Global acquisitions for Nick Australia and New Zealand are largely driven by the international programming group, and Baldwin says he'll naturally be on the lookout for content that complements the channel's library of top performers, which include *SpongeBob SquarePants*, *iCarly*, *Victorious*, *Big Time Rush*, *Dora the*

Explorer, *Go, Diego, Go!* and *Wonder Pets!* He's particularly open to innovative formats that have the potential to travel internationally and lend themselves to multiple platforms, a recent example being *House of Anubis*. Baldwin says the global co-pro does a good job of "fulfilling fan needs and using the mystery to drive that audience online and back on-air again."

Though Nickelodeon looks for shows that suit the brand internationally, the channel also commits 10% of its air-time to local original content. Baldwin says a favorite among Aussie and Kiwi kids is *Camp Orange*—the six-year-old homegrown competition show sees 14 best friends face challenges in an outdoor environment and engages viewers on-air, online and at live events.

Digital initiatives "It used to be about getting your audience to line up outside of the front door and come through, but now there are many doors and many points of entry," says Baldwin. He brings a breadth of experience in digital content from past projects, which include Nick Australia's kid-friendly social media environment Clickhead Space, where kids' avatars appear on-air, and an interactive *Penguins of Madagascar* game that drove viewers back to new eps. Right now, Baldwin's Australian team is developing a sticker-based *Dora and Diego* app for iPad and iPod Touch called *Sticker Safari* that will roll out internationally. "It's one of the ways we're understanding where kids connect with the story," he says. Nick Australia will also be collaborating on pre-existing apps, such as the *SpongeBob* app developed by Nick UK, to localize them for the Australian and New Zealand markets. —Kate Calder

Aussies vs. Kiwis

Though Australia and New Zealand often get lumped together when it comes to territory deals, Nick director of television and digital content Hugh Baldwin says part of his new remit is tailoring channel offerings to reach two distinct audiences.

Tongue-in-cheek

"Australians in general have an irreverent and slightly questioning take on the world, and Aussie kids also like to question stuff in a humorous way," says Baldwin. So Nickelodeon makes a point of airing local wrap-around content and producing live events with an irreverent flavor.

Maori culture

Though New Zealand has a similar sensibility, Baldwin is mindful that it has its own identity. "It's really important to our partners in New Zealand that Nick is there for New Zealand kids," says Baldwin. For example, one of New Zealand's points of difference is its strong Maori culture, for which the channel created a Maori-language version of several *SpongeBob* eps two years ago.

Competitive spirit

"We're also very competitive with each other," admits Baldwin. The latest season of homegrown reality adventure series *Camp Orange* included a pair of Kiwi best friends getting in on the action. "The exciting part for me was to leverage the natural competition, yet camaraderie between Australia and New Zealand," he says. —Kate Calder



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PopPixie

Rainbow's Winx spin-off takes global flight



Almost immediately following the 2005 debut of hit girls toon *Winx Club*, Loreto, Italy-based Rainbow recognized that the series' spritely secondary PopPixie characters had struck a chord with the show's female fans ages six to 11. Not tempted to fast-track development, however, the prodco didn't launch spin-off series *PopPixie* until fall 2010, bolstered by a slew of presales to nets like Italian pubcaster Rai, Israel's Noga and France Télévisions that were more than eager to take a chance on the property.

On-air



Same but different Though *Winx Club* had given *PopPixie* a head start on building brand awareness with both audiences and buyers, the concept still had to prove itself on the worldwide stage. "The properties are definitely complementary because of their core values," says Rainbow's Fabio Calorio. However, he explains, the formats are very different. *Winx Club* features 26-minute episodes feeding an epic narrative of romantic love. *PopPixie* (52 x 13 minutes) is a more light-hearted and surreal comedy that revolves around the ever-optimistic pixies using their individual talents—no matter how bizarre—to solve problems and get themselves out of funny situations.

Rollout strategy For Calorio, the shorter episode length and comedic tone of the series meant negotiating for daily broadcasts and repeats, and ideally early-morning time slots, to build the show's profile. "Wherever it was not possible at the very beginning, thanks to good ratings, we were eventually able to start daily broadcasts," he says.

Since the mid-August launch on France 3's *Mon Ludo*, the series has achieved an average audience share above 20% among its core four- to 10-year-old viewers. In October, that take reached a peak of 45%. The series also scored a record high of 58% of four- to six-year-olds on Spain's *Clan TV* in October, and the same with Portuguese kids ages four to six on *TVI* in November.

In the meantime, in an effort to emulate the success that *Winx Club* has had since debuting on Nickelodeon last fall, Rainbow has been sussing out a global broadcast partner for *PopPixie*.

Promoting pixies Calorio says TV promos were the starting point for the property, so creating awareness in different territories meant working with local partners to create on-air spots for the show that had a high dose of comedy. "It's a property that allows people to play with it," says Calorio, adding that humorous on-air promos worked particularly well in France.

Calorio explains that the second phase of the rollout is built around licensing and merchandising efforts. Rainbow worked with master toy partner Bandai in Portugal to create an on-air giveaway program—the special holiday contest held during *TVI*'s live morning show culminated in 20 *PopPixie* dolls being delivered to viewers' homes.

"We worked together with Bandai and *TVI* to find something that would be good for the broadcaster and would give visibility to the property," says Calorio.

Next moves Rainbow's merchandising plans also include releasing the episodes on DVD and a *PopPixie* magazine, produced by its publishing division, that helps promote the series and related licensing programs through comics and contests. Emulating the *Winx Club* model, Rainbow has worked up a *PopPixie* style guide and has back-to-school merchandise top-of-mind for the next wave of consumer products. Rainbow also plans to put *PopPixie* on *Winx*'s path into other media like digital platforms and live events. —Kate Calder

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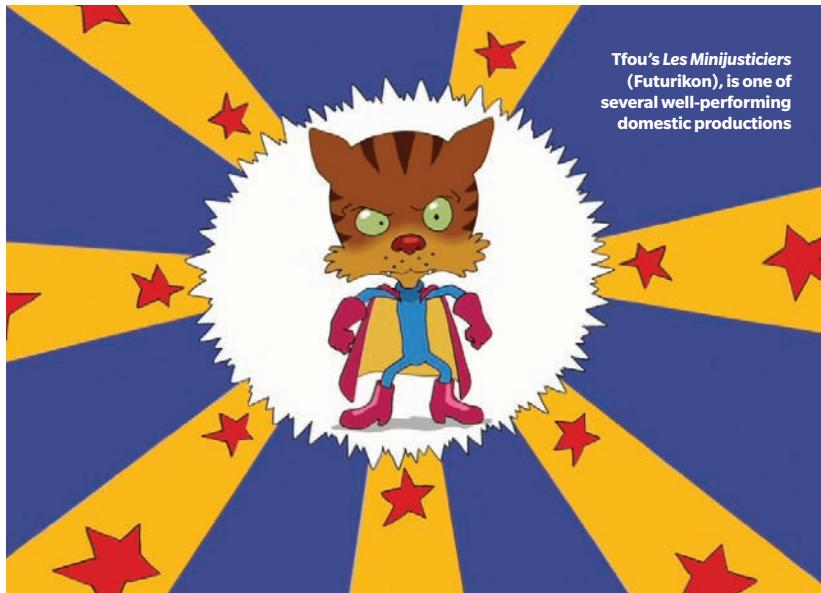
Family fare leads in France

There's a lot of co-viewing going on, but recent ratings also show that Gallic kids are quite keen on original content produced in their territory

Terrestrial operator TF1 is the clear winner as the most-watched channel among France's more than eight million kid viewers ages four to 14, according to February ratings just released by metrics house Eurodata TV Worldwide. Of the region's 10 best-performing channels, the commercial broadcaster has a 21.3% share of kid viewers, a full 8.4% lead over the runner-up, dedicated children's DTT channel Gulli (12.9%), which targets the six to 14 demo.

Eurodata TV media consultant Johanna Karsenty says TF1's solid lineup of American hits like *House* and *CSI*, as well as blockbuster movies such as *Shrek*, attract both adults and children. And on the other end of the co-viewing spectrum, Gulli has been steadily growing its audience share with kid-targeted programming like *Beyblade* (Nelvana) that kids and families watch together.

Karsenty explains that original French productions also rank high with kids across the terrestrial and DTT spectrum. For example, TF1's top-rated kid shows, which air every morning from 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. on the Tfou block, include *Les Minijusticiers* (Futurikon) and *Totally Spies!* (Marathon Media). Homegrown adult favorites on TF1 that rate well with the under-14s include *Josephine*:

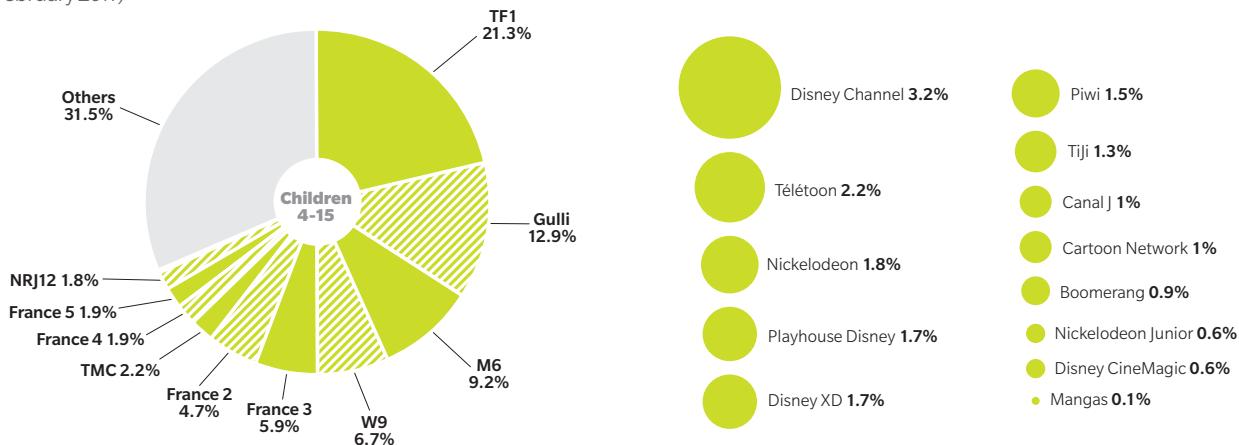


Profession Ange Garden and *Le Juste Prix*, a French adaptation of game show *Price is Right*. Other local faves include Gulli's *Esprits Fantomes* and *Garfield & Cie*, airing under France 3 children's umbrella brand Ludo.

Youth-targeted channels make up 17.6% of the cable and satellite pay-TV universe in the country. Measuring upwards of five million children in subscription households (from August 30, 2010 to February 13, 2011), Disney Channel and Téletoon lead the pack. Karsenty says both of these nets get a bump in market share thanks to their dominance among girl viewers attracted to shows like *Hannah Montana* and *Sonny with a Chance* (Disney) and *Winx Club* (Téletoon). Boys, however, spread their viewing hours amongst kidcasters including Nickelodeon, Playhouse Disney, Disney XD, Canal J and Cartoon Network, with each taking a smaller chunk of the pie. Preschool channels Piwi (1.5%) and Tiji (1.3%) both hold their own with moderate market shares. Perennial classic series, including *Barbapapa*, *Franklin* and *The Smurfs*, tend to draw the biggest audiences on these nets. —Kate Calder

Market shares

(February 2011)



Eurodata TV Worldwide is a French company specializing in TV audience ratings research and market intelligence that offers TV data as well as expertise and insight into the performance of TV shows in more than 90 countries. Ratings information is provided directly by research institutes in each country, which, like Eurodata's parent company, Médiamétrie, measure daily television audience ratings. For more information, contact deputy sales director Joanna Szybist (jszybist@eurodatatv.com, 33-1-4758-9434).

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The Amazing World of Gumball's mixed-media design made it stand apart from the crowd at CN

Ready to roll

Cartoon Network's Euro studio debuts first series **Gumball**, gets international pickup

With five years of imagining, developing and honing concepts under its belt, Cartoon Network Development Studio Europe is ready to debut its first commission. Created by the studio's Ben Bocquelet, *The Amazing World of Gumball* is set to air in the US on May 9, with the series' first two eps launching in the UK around the same time. (A full series rollout is slated internationally for later this year.) And based on extensive audience testing, Cartoon Network has already commissioned a second season of 40 x 11-minute eps set to head into production in June.

Daniel Lennard, VP of original series and development, explains that the project was pulled from a crop of ideas conceived by the studio's staff. When the studio, owned by Turner Broadcasting, settled on *Gumball*, Lennard says it spent nine months just fleshing out the concept before attempting to complete the first frame of animation.

"For me that's a key reason why we have a great show on our hands," Lennard explains. "I couldn't feel more strongly about the need for development in animation. We were able to devote resources to time and making sure not only that it looked great, but that we knew who the characters were and how the audience was going to respond to them."

The toon follows the misadventures of 12-year-old cat Gumball and his family, who live in the weird town of Elmore. Also a bit on the odd side, his school friends include a tyrannosaurus rex, a cheerleading peanut and a banana. But it was this fresh comic appeal and dynamic mixed-media design—a carefully honed blend of 2-D

and 3-D animation set against live-action backgrounds—that really tipped the scales in *Gumball's* favor with the international programming team.

Lennard explains that Turner's extensive testing involved the time-consuming and expensive process of dubbing finished episodes into French, Italian, Spanish and Polish to really get a concrete take on how the series would perform all over the world, as well as in the US. He says the characters, fresh humor and high dose of visual slapstick make the show work across languages and territories. He adds that the test results also helped *Gumball* nab a great slot on Cartoon Network US's Monday night comedy block.

The Euro studio worked with Ireland's Boulder Media on overall animation and with Studio Soi in Germany on the 3-D elements. Lennard says conducting the production in-house was key to managing the breakthrough technology that went into realizing the design. The process of integrating a realistic background with 2-D and 3-D characters was time-consuming and required close collaboration and experimentation with Studio Soi. The final product ended up combining live-action footage (shot near San Francisco), an infinite number of carefully Photoshopped images and a huge dose of final compositing.

Next up, Lennard says the studio's in the process of hatching two new projects for which it's open to finding co-production partners to help get them off the ground. —Kate Calder

NowTrending Media

What's bubbling up in kid content culture

Kids getting smarter...phones

Portable screens are proliferating among both parents and kids, and the content they consume on these devices is ever-evolving. According to The NPD Group, one in five US parents currently own a smartphone, and 25% of that group shares them with their kids. When surveyed, parents said their children spend most of their time on smartphones playing gaming apps (83%) and listening to music (59%). Watching video clips (41%), taking pictures (45%), surfing the web (44%) and texting (40%) were the runners-up.

Sprockets rockets

Circus Dreams takes a behind-the-scenes look at Circus Smirkus, the travelling youth circus group and training program where aspiring trapeze artists, clowns and tightrope walkers build their skills while dealing with classic teen issues. The 81-minute, US-produced film for kids ages 10 to 13 is just one of more than 80 films from 27 countries (including factual, scripted and animated formats) being screened this month during the Sprockets Toronto International Film Festival for Children and Youth. The growing event is an off-shoot of the ultra-glitz Toronto International Film Festival held annually in September.

Willow whips up fan base

After emerging on the pop music charts last year with her hit single "Whip My Hair," the 10-year-old daughter of Will Smith is blowing up in kid culture. Following the release of her second single "21st Century Girl," Willow Smith headed out on tour to open for the current reigning king of tweendom, Justin Bieber. On the cusp of becoming a verified triple threat, Willow made her acting debut alongside her father in *I Am Legend*, had a role in 2008's *Kit Kitteredge: An American Girl* and is gearing up to star in a movie remake of hit musical *Little Orphan Annie*.



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Made in China?

Production costs are up more than 15% this year in the world's manufacturing hub. The question is whether or not toy makers can continue to pay the price.

BY GARY RUSAK

The shifting economic tides are signalling the end of inexpensive manufacturing in the Guangdong province of China, home to an estimated 4,000 toy manufacturing firms. The rising cost of doing business in the region is so significant, in fact, that many manufacturers and their toymakers are actively looking for new production centers to counteract the current price hikes. While it's unlikely that an entire industry can just pull up stakes and leave right now, industry watchers agree that the ever-swelling costs will have to be passed down to retailers and ultimately consumers in the short term.



The problem

Simply put, it's getting more expensive to manufacture goods in the South China hub. The Purchasing Manager's Index—the primary measure of manufacturing activity in China compiled and issued by the country's government—dipped for the third consecutive month in February to 52.2 from January's 52.9. The number, arrived at by China's Federation of Logistics and Purchasing indicates what many in the toy industry already know—manufacturing is slowing in the country.

"There has been a drum beat and it's been beating regularly in the last six months," says Jay Foreman founder of The Bridge Direct and Acorn Management Group and a toy industry veteran with 30 years of experience. "Prices have been rising steadily for more than five years and then they stabilized because of the financial crisis. But as the economy has picked up, it has really gotten intense in the last three to four months."

The reasons for the increases are comprehensive and inescapable. Firstly, inflation is a reality for the blazing furnace of China's economy. Currently the country's inflation rate is clocking gains close to 5% per month, resulting in a cash-rich economy that's constantly applying upward pressure on wages.

"The Chinese government has a plan to double the minimum wage over the next five years," says Arnie Rubin, founder, CEO and president of Funrise Toy Company and past chairman of the Toy Industry Association. Rubin says that inflation, combined with the growing cost of competing with electronic goods manufacturers for labor, is making toy manufacturing in China almost untenable.

"In the toy industry, we are competing with other industries that can afford to pay higher wages," Rubin says, explaining that electronic manufacturers' percentage of labor costs per product is a fraction of what toycos have to pay.

The rising valuation of the Renminbi—China's currency that reached its highest mark against the US dollar in five years last June—is also a factor helping to jack up

manufacturing prices and give toy makers pause. "For the first time ever you have manufacturers quoting in Renminbi," says Richard Gottlieb, a New York-based toy industry consultant and publisher of online trade *Global Toys News*. "That would have been unheard of a year ago."

Whether or not the Renminbi is undervalued is an issue for economists to debate, but the overall upshot is that the currency is on the rise, putting upward pressure on the cost of manufacturing in China.

These factors could be mitigated through controlled wage increases, more efficient compliance procedures and hoped-for government tax breaks, but skyrocketing raw materials costs are beyond the purviews of both government and business.

Crude oil prices rose by nearly 13.8% between January and December 2010, according to the US Energy Information Agency. And so far this year, it isn't slowing down, with the first three months of 2011 marking similar increases. Meanwhile, political instability in North Africa and growing worldwide demand continue to boost prices.

"Crude oil is jumping," says Rubin. "It's the genesis for all plastic material, so obviously it is going to have an effect on the toy industry."

Oil isn't the only commodity growing more expensive by the day. Cotton prices are also on the rise, meaning more cash is required to buy the materials needed for accessories, such as garments for dolls and parts of plush toys.

"The cost of cotton is through the roof," says Gottlieb. According to the US Department of Agriculture, cotton prices hit a 15-year high in 2010, and a recent drought in China has cut the country's production of the commodity by almost 15%.

It's a bitter stew for manufacturers to digest—higher wages as a result of a rising minimum wage and labor competition, currency hikes, soaring raw material costs, inflation spikes and the additional (yet hard-to-calculate) cost of environmental and social compliance.

Simple plastic toy manufacturing may be moving to centers like Vietnam, while building more intricate items (like this Justin Bieber tour bus from The Bridge) requires China's still-superior infrastructure

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So, what's the damage?

It is anyone's guess how much more manufacturing prices will rise in the coming months. "In stationery, I have heard about a 50% increase in cost almost overnight," says Rob Corney, MD at London-based licensing agency Bulldog Licensing. "That's extreme, but it's difficult to say otherwise. I would hesitate to put a number on how much retail prices will go up."

Gottlieb is less hesitant and says that prices have already climbed between 5% and 30%, depending on the product. He adds that the median price increase is sitting at about 15%.

It's an initial guesstimate that Foreman agrees with. "I'd say it's 15% to 20% on the first cost of goods," he says.

Corney says the price increase will eventually hit consumers as manufacturers and retailers will need to keep up their margins in an ever-competitive marketplace. "Retail is never willing to put up prices or trim margins," he says. "But at some point, something has to give. It will come to a point where there is simply no option, and retailers will have to react."

However, Rubin notes that in an industry reliant on the spending of discretionary income like the toy market, keeping prices down is the number-one concern and the one factor that every supplier knows is paramount. "The requirement for keeping retail prices down is important," he says. "If they become too expensive, they simply will not be purchased. We aren't talking about bread and milk here, we are talking about toys."

Settling on new shores

Given the arguably historic pressures they're facing, many manufacturers are looking outside of South China to establish a new manufacturing base. However, this approach is fraught with difficulties. The region is so well-established and is already home to the expertise and, more importantly, the infrastructure required to carry out large-scale toy manufacturing.

"Honestly, their strength isn't even the lowest price anymore," says Gottlieb. "It's the infrastructure. In that region they can make and ship massive quantities of

goods because of their ports and highways. It won't be easy for any other territory to compete against that."

Foreman agrees that it will take a long time to establish the intricate expertise and infrastructure needed to compete with China.

"The toy industry is very specialized," Foreman says. "Everybody is looking everywhere, but I think you have to understand the reality of the business. The type of equipment and machinery and the sophistication in the production facilities are all in China. There are no moves outside of China, in my opinion."

"For the first time ever you have manufacturers quoting in Renminbi."

—Richard Gottlieb, industry analyst

That may depend, though, on the particular types of toys being made. Simpler plastic items that don't require intricate injection moulding have already moved out of China, according to Rubin. "A lot of our production is now in Vietnam," he says. "It was a natural progression for us. Lower-priced goods are going to evolve to different areas in China or out of the country altogether."

Corney says that in the short-term there are not many viable alternatives to South China, but that if the current conditions continue without significant relief in terms of government incentives, manufacturers will have no choice but to look elsewhere.

"People are already looking at Eastern Europe, Turkey, and even in Middle Eastern countries like Iran," Corney contends. "I also think there is a huge opportunity for newly liberated territories to increase their manufacturing base. They could significantly challenge China over the next 20 years." **K**

BookBet Sidekicks



Hitting bookstores in hardcover and paperback this July is California-based graphic artist Dan Santat's labor of love, *Sidekicks*. "I just wondered what the animal versions of superheroes would look like," he says. "I started drawing this wiener dog as The Flash and went from there."

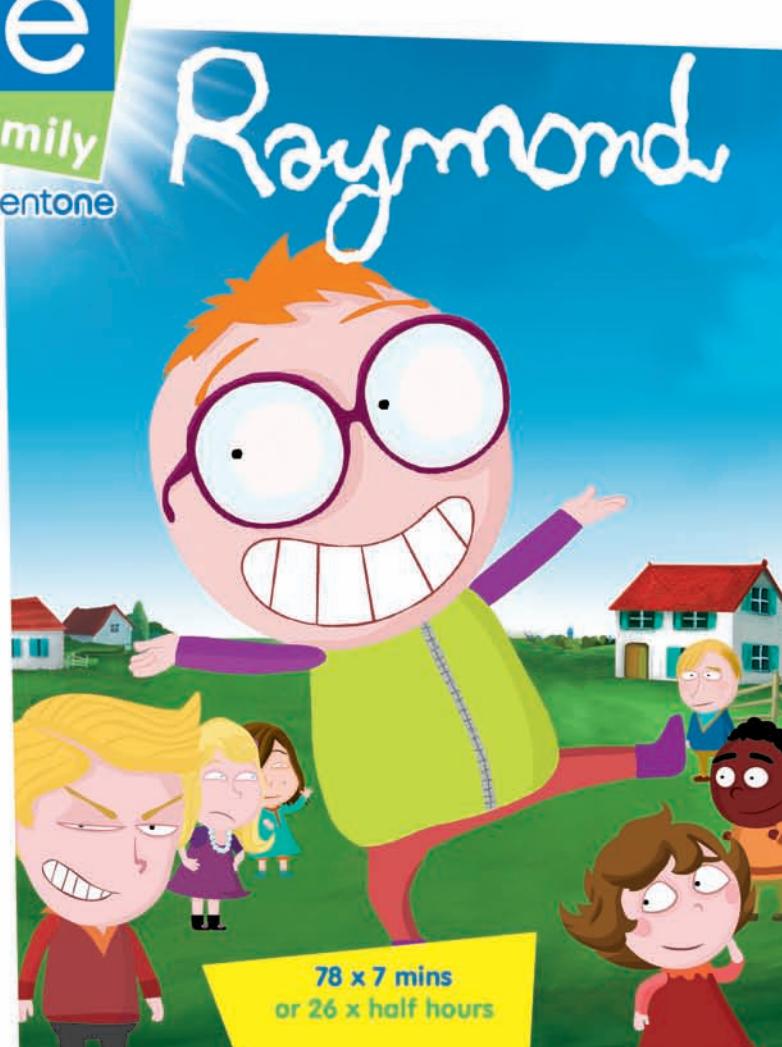
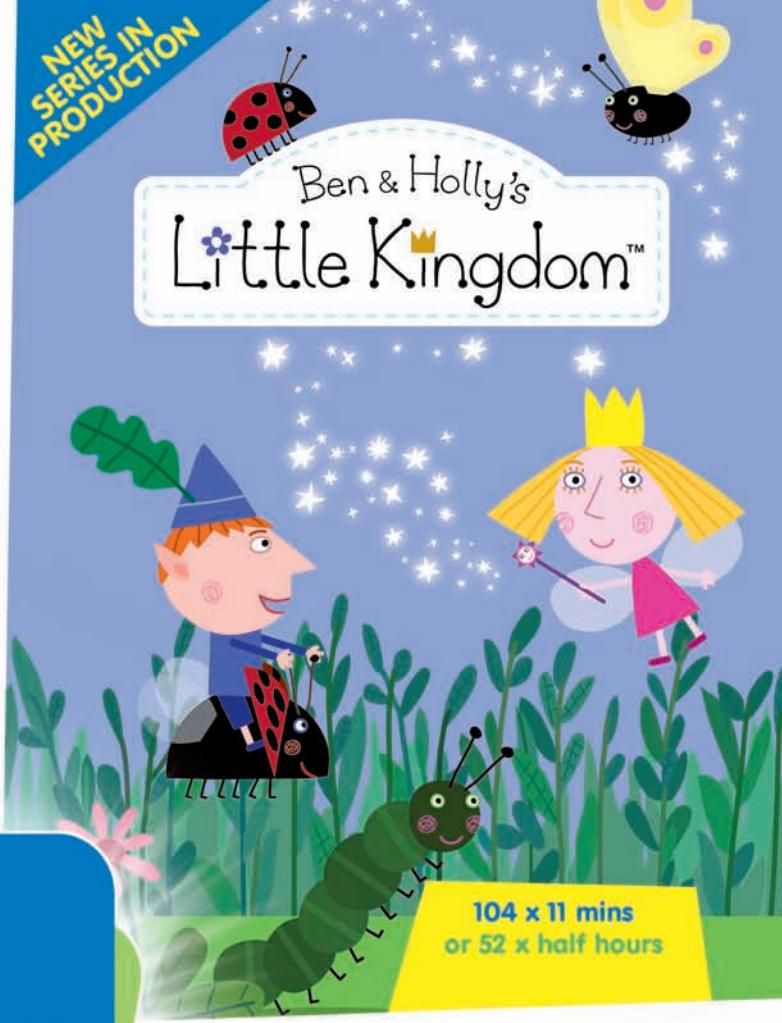
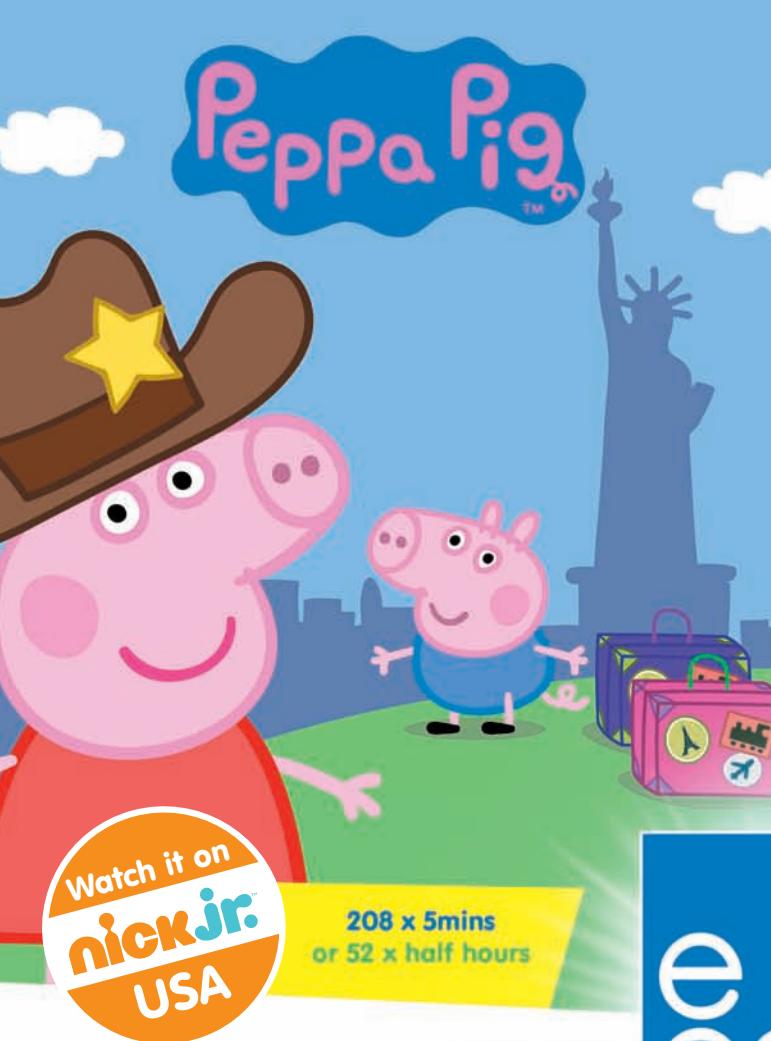
The graphic novel aimed at tweens tells the tale of Captain Amazing, a canine superhero who's getting a bit long in the tooth. So in order to keep Metro City safe,

he needs to find a trusty companion most crime fighters have in their bag of tricks—a sidekick. Luckily, he has four pets of his own from which to choose.

Santat, who has been working on the project for seven years, will be attending San Diego Comic-Con this year to launch it. The full-time illustrator and creator of Disney series *The Replacements* says he would be interested in working with *Sidekicks'* universe of characters in a number

of different formats and mediums. "When you put a story on the table, you automatically think of all the places it could go," he says. "The potential is there with these characters for video games, plush toys and whatever else. You never know."

Published by Scholastic imprint Arthur A. Levine Books, the title has been picked up by the major North American bookstore chains, including Borders and Barnes & Noble. —Gary Rusak





Pittsburgh Steelers head coach Mike Tomlin gets animated in *Rush Zone*

Rushing the field

With a football-themed series on NickToons, **The NFL** aims to expand the brand into kids consumer products

The National Football League is the undisputed champ of the North American pro sports scene. In fact, each of its 32 franchises are valued in the neighborhood of US\$1 billion. So despite an ongoing labor dispute, it's fair to say the league's long-term viability is secure. To build on this momentum, the NFL is endeavoring to extend the brand into the kids arena, and finding the right toy and videogame partners might just help it make the move.

"We have made a concerted effort to focus on our young fans in a way that doesn't just dumb-down the NFL," says Peter O'Reilly, VP of marketing and fan strategy. "We want younger fans to have contact with the league in a customized way in the places where they are spending time already."

To that end, the league developed the concept of NFL Rush Zone in 2007. What began as a virtual world and web portal has evolved into a 22-episode animated series called *NFL RushZone: Guardians of the Core*. The show bowed on NickToons US last September, timed to coincide with the league's 2010 season kick-off, and culminated with a 75-minute movie broadcast during SuperBowl weekend in February.

The series, aimed at a broad six to 13 demographic, was promoted using the NFL's many marketing venues, including in-stadium ads and previews during live events. A special screening of the movie was also part of its Super Bowl NFL Experience, the league's temporary theme park set up in Dallas, Texas during Super Bowl 2011.

The narrative of the series focuses on young hero Ish, who must recover 32 shards of a power source called "The Core" that has been divided among the stadiums that host the NFL franchises. The trick is, Ish needs to find the shards before the villainous Sudden Death and his evil sidekick Blitz Bots get to them. The toon mines the iconic NFL team IP with a twist to make the brands relatable to the target audience.

"When we started building the bible, it was important to work with all 32 teams and make sure that we nailed the essence of their brands and could still make them come alive for kids," O'Reilly says. For example, the Pittsburgh Steelers are represented by a character that embodies the hard-nosed, blue-collar attitude that has come to define the sports franchise. And with a successful series in the can and talks for a second season ongoing, the NFL saw fit to travel to New York Toy Fair in February. With a roster of licensees including Hallmark, Crayola, Classic Balloons and Rawlings currently gearing up to put their NFL kids wares on major retail shelves this fall, the org is now working on scoring other category partners.

"We are looking for the right set of partners," says O'Reilly. "We are being pretty methodical. There is a lot of collectibility with the series that we think will work well for toys. And we also see it working really well for handheld and console games."

O'Reilly says the company has made *Rush Zone* a high priority and will be utilizing its extensive marketing and promotional capacity to build it out. "For us, we already had youth viewership, but this is a space you wouldn't necessarily expect the NFL to be in," says O'Reilly. "It's a unique opportunity." —Gary Rusak

Licensee Lowdown

Penguin UK builds kids licensing biz

What Penguin Children's Books has created a new group that combines its BBC, Sunbird and Ladybird licensing teams, tapping Eric Huang as the publishing director for the rechristened Media and Entertainment division. The new entity now handles all in-bound licensing for the UK-based publisher.

Latest innovation "There has been a real shift in licensing," says Huang. "Movie and TV tie-ins used to be our bread-and-butter, but it's getting tougher and tougher to take a film or TV property and make it last a long time." For this reason, Huang says the new group will continue Penguin's strategy of aligning with virtual world properties like Club Penguin and Moshi Monsters, a 2010 licensing acquisition. "This area is growing quickly for us," he says. "Creating products for virtual worlds and interactive properties is something that everyone is scrambling to do. It's a deeper, more personal connection for kids."

Huang says that products stemming from interactive properties have to offer more than just a traditional publishing program, and therein lays the challenge. "It has to offer more and be interesting enough that kids will actually want to read about it. You can't just mimic what is online," he contends.

Huang points to Penguin's *Moshi Monsters: The Moshling Collector's Guide*, the first handbook for the website aimed at kids ages seven to 12. It includes hints and clues about how to create different and—more importantly—exclusive monsters. "You could only create them if you read the book," says Huang. "It differentiated the title in the marketplace."



What's next Huang says he is always on the lookout for more virtual world and social gaming IPs to add to Penguin's 15 to 20 ongoing licenses.

"Every year we are looking to have a new story to tell in preschool, seven to 12s and teens," Huang says. "I'm speaking with a lot of IP owners now and they are in love with the idea of making their virtual worlds and games into books. Of course, I'm spending a lot of my time thinking of ways to make our books into virtual worlds. If we could swap places, we would all be happy."

Contact Eric Huang, publishing director, Media and Entertainment Group, Penguin Children's Books (eric.huang@uk.penguin.com • 44-207-010-3000) —Gary Rusak

A large, stylized illustration of the Cat in the Hat, a white cat with black stripes, wearing his signature red and white striped hat and a red bow tie. He is looking towards the right with a wide-open mouth, as if speaking or singing. The background is a bright blue sky with white clouds.

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Robotic retail

High-tech vending machines are poised to become a new small-format sales channel

Vending machines might still be most readily regarded of as a convenient way to grab a chocolate bar or soda, particularly in North America, but new technology on the block is looking to change that perception and open up an alternative retail avenue at the same time.

According to IBISWorld, the global vending machine business is valued at roughly US\$11.3 billion, with more than 90% of vending revenue coming from snack, candy and beverage sales. But those related revenues have been dropping, while the sales of non-food products are on the rise.

And at the forefront of the biz in North America is ZoomSystems, a manufacturer of vending machines that specialize in dispensing impulse-buy items with higher price tags. "What we are doing is creating a new channel for brands and a way for retailers to reach consumers," says Gower Smith, founder and CEO of the San Francisco, California-based company. He positions the machines as "automated retail" and says his company is striving to create the "most productive small-format retail stores on the planet."

ZoomShops are currently located in airports, casinos, bus stations, malls, and even on highway exits throughout the US. Mega-brand Apple and electronics retail giant Best Buy have partnered with the company to offer their goods through the point-of-sale system that spits out product at the touch of a screen.

"For example, the only way you can buy an iPod at a US airport is through a ZoomShop," says Smith. "We are putting these stores where the consumers are."

And as consumers become more comfortable with online shopping, they also become more familiar with ZoomShops' interactive interface and benefit from the on-the-spot delivery of goods. "There is not a huge growth in consumer spending, but there is a change in their behavior," says Smith. "We are bringing fast, easy convenience to consumers and the brands that they already love."

Roughly 1,000 ZoomShops have been set up throughout the US, with a handful in Japan and inroads are just being made in Europe. As a private company, Zoom Systems does not talk publicly about its financing models, but Smith notes that Zoom licenses its proprietary software and

technology and charges a monthly fee to operate the machines. As an added incentive, the machinery's software offers retailers and brand owners deep metrics about its consumers and their buying habits.

On the kids front, Gower sees the technology spurring growth in the market because the consumer base is already very comfortable with online shopping. It's a cultural shift also noted by Jeff Thibodeau, VP of operations for Dayton, Ohio-based Innovative Vending Solutions.

"A lot of the younger generation would rather go purchase something from a machine than have any human contact," Thibodeau says. "It's funny to say, but it's true."

Innovative Vending Solutions has more than 20 different new-style vending machines installed across the US and has pending deals in Canada, as well. Areas with good potential, Thibodeau says, are machines that offer spirit shop merchandise at high schools, and others filled with infant products.

"A lot of schools really don't have the budget to open up a full retail shop, so a machine makes sense," he says. "We have a baby-products machine in the Kansas City airport. It's a concept that we think works, and we are certainly looking for partners to take it further."

Innovative Vending Solutions offers different models, including leasing the machines to smaller clients and engaging in a revenue-sharing setup with larger brands. There is also a monthly fee for software and credit card processing. The machines themselves can range anywhere in price between US\$6,000 and US\$20,000 each.

—Gary Rusak



Rainbow to rep Nick, lands new master toy deal

March was a busy month for Loreto, Italy-based Rainbow. The full-service content creator and distributor inked an exclusive deal to represent Nickelodeon Consumer Products in Italy, brought in more capital investment, and signed a new master toy deal for its Huntik IP.

Rainbow will now be licensing Nick properties including SpongeBob SquarePants, Dora the Explorer, The Penguins of Madagascar, iCarly and Ni Hao, Kai-Lan throughout Italy. New tween musical series *Victorious* is a particular focus for Rainbow, owing to its L&M experience and success with *Winx Club*.

Rainbow also recently announced a US\$10-million investment in the production of the second season of *Huntik*, the boys action counterpart to girl fave *Winx Club*. The cash infusion comes on the heels of a multi-territory master deal with Italian toy giant Giochi Preziosi that covers Europe and Russia for action figures, role-play items, playsets and accessories. The series has also spawned attractions at the soon-to-be-opened US\$450-million Magic Rainbow Land Theme Park in Rome. —Gary Rusak

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Spyro enters toy territory



Successfully marrying physical toys with an immersive video game experience has been the Holy Grail of sorts for those in the kids business for some time now, and this year was no exception. Making its inaugural appearance at New York Toy Fair, Santa Monica, California-based gameco **Activision** introduced Skylanders Spyro's Adventure, a combination adventure video game and collectible toy slated to hit mass-market retailers worldwide this fall.

What it is The new concept features familiar purple dragon Spyro, but adds a lineup of more than 30 new characters to the video game property. After stopping production of *Guitar Hero*, Skylanders is being trumpeted as Activision's best bet to follow the former franchise's success. The February launch was much ballyhooed, in fact, with Toys 'R' Us chairman and CEO Jerry Storch pledging support for the IP.

How it works It all starts when a figurine is placed on a lighted platform that's plugged into a gaming console. The non-articulated figurine then transforms into an animated creature on-screen that users can control in game world. The Skylanders' narrative, fleshed out by some of the Hollywood writers who helped develop mega-franchises like *Toy Story*, features heroic defenders cast out of their world by baddie Chaos.

"The experience is as deep and immersive as any other well-produced video game," says John Coyne, VP of marketing at Activision. "The big differentiator is that kids can experience play on two levels." With a primary target of boys six to 12, another key to the property is that the figurines retain all of the game-play information, lending continuity to the play pattern. "The toys become the center of this universe," Coyne says. "Kids will be able to bring their figurine to their friend's house and it will remember where they are in the game and what experience points they have earned."

Retail proposition Skylanders Spyro's Adventure is rolling out via a starter kit (US\$69) that includes software versioned for all major consoles, the Portal of Power, three figurines and three trading cards. It also comes with a rich online component that features different games and content. Additional individual figures will likely retail for under US\$10 apiece. Pricing is still being finalized on the Adventure Packs, including pirate and ghost extensions still in development. "With the Adventure Packs, you will be able to drop a pirate ship onto the portal and open up whole new adventures," says Coyne.

Marketing The multi-billion-dollar company has plans to use its considerable resources to market the game through all the traditional channels and make a big push in the social media space. "It'll be a full launch in terms of depth and spend, significant on every level," says Coyne, adding that a licensing program will not be too far behind. "We are currently speaking to a number of potential licensing partners," he says. "When something captures kids' hearts and minds, they really want to get deep into the experience." —Gary Rusak

Top Toys

France (January)

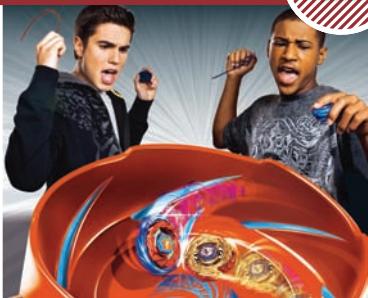
1

Zhu Zhu Pets
(Cepia/Giochi Preziosi)



2

Beyblade Metal Fusion
(Hasbro)



3

Ninjago Spinner Wave
(Lego)



4

Bakugan Starter Pack
(Spin Master)



5

Mall aux Jouets/Toy chest
(Roldan)

Source: NPD EuroToys EPoS panel, France (January 2011—covering 70% of sales in value)

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It's only rock n' roll...

But US kids six to 11 like it, and many other genres of music—Nick delves into their listening habits

BY ERIN MILLER



Photo: flattop341

There is no denying that music plays a major part in kids' lives. From song lyrics to a singer's life-story, kids are finding ways to connect to music on personal levels. And for the first part of our Kaleidoscope Music study, we spoke with kids ages six to 11 to understand the role that music has in their world, how they absorb it and where they're listening to it.

Kids reported being exposed to various genres of music from hip hop and pop to classic rock. The names of performers like Bruno Mars, Katy Perry, Justin Bieber, Taylor Swift and the Beatles are mentioned by kids as their favorite singers or bands. It's well known that the resurgence of classic rock music has become a noticeable trend for this younger generation. A few years ago, iPods and family-friendly games like *Rock Band* and *Guitar Hero* introduced kids to the songs of their parents' generation. Since then, pop culture continues to introduce children to music beyond their years. Fox TV series *Glee*, for example, has exposed kids to various genres and generations of music, allowing these songs to live alongside today's radio hits on their playlists.

According to the kids we interviewed, other influencers when it comes to music include parents and older siblings. We know that families are looking for occasions to share entertainment with one another, and thanks to the

accessibility and shareable nature of the iPod, households are finding it easier to create shared music experiences. Kids with older brothers and sisters often find out about artists and bands through their siblings. This is especially true in the case of six- and seven-year-olds. While music isn't as meaningful to the younger ones' lives at this stage, they like it and are completely immersed in listening. Older siblings, parents, TV and movies are the main sources of influence for this set. Because six- and seven-year-olds may still have a foot in preschool properties as well as in TV targeting older kids, it's no surprise they mentioned the likes of Dora the Explorer and Scooby-Doo as their favorite singers right alongside Katy Perry and Taio Cruz. If these younger kids have older siblings, they are likely to move into popular music and away from cartoon and movie songs more quickly.

There are many ways kids are listening to their music. Children six years old and up are frequently in possession of an iPod or MP3 device. And kids, including some as young as six, are very knowledgeable about how to download music, whether it's buying a song online or importing a CD's contents to their computers. However, the radio still plays a huge role in how they listen to music. Additionally, kids reported going to websites such as YouTube to listen to and watch music videos. In fact, almost all of the kids involved in this study said they like watching music videos. According to one eight-year-old girl, "It tells the story of the song." Others commented that music videos simply allow them to see what their favorite artists look like.

Being able to relate to an artist or song is also an important reason why kids like the musicians they do. While children at this age certainly may not be identifying in-depth with the issues about which artists sing or rap, they appreciate songs that depict real-life happenings. And while there are gender skews when it comes to relating to certain artists, the universal truth remains that kids are looking for ways to connect. The fact that Taylor Swift (for girls) and Eminem (for boys) make a point of saying they write about their personal experiences only increases their likability with kids, especially among 10- and 11-year-olds. Now that we see these true connections start taking place with this age group, it will be interesting to further explore how deeply tweens and teens identify with music and artists in the next issue. **K**

For more information, contact Kaleidoscope@nick.com

(Source: *Nick Kids & Family Research*, March 2011. Qualitative sample size: N=46.)

In an effort to keep you in touch with our audience and give a voice to our consumers, the Brand and Consumer Insights Department at Nickelodeon Kids & Family has created Nickelodeon Kaleidoscope. Every month, Kaleidoscope will capture key areas of interest across the kid and family cultural landscape, provide an understanding of attitudes and behaviors, and report on trends and buzz.

Muse of the Month

Dream weaver

Imagination and exploration fuel 10-year-old Greg's world

In the mind of Vermont native **Greg**, the world is a giant place to explore, and the sky is literally the limit. "My biggest dream is to create a space shuttle that's fast and easy for everyone to use," he told us. "Then there would be no need for roads. It would be like a flying car and it would make me a multi-zillionaire."

Hey, that's our dream, too! So why isn't there already a flying car in every garage? It could be because we all became tweens, then teens, and then adults.

Greg is at a magical age when exploration is the norm, and fear of being judged still hasn't hampered his spirit. His lifestyle is testament to his happy dabbling—he likes reading, science and math, takes tennis lessons, plays hockey, badminton and football, and he also reads comic books, plays on his computer and loves movies. In his spare time, he invents board games.

If Greg is like most nine- to 11-year-olds, he will soon hone in on the skills and activities in which he shows the most promise and leave behind those that don't help build his confidence. Life just gets heavier in middle school, and kids have a heightened awareness of social comparison. If he's not a great singer, for example, he probably won't try out for the school musical. But if he gets encouragement from peers and adults in science class, Greg just might go on to invent that space shuttle.



Meanwhile, media can connect with these younger kids by presenting more role models they can relate to—those with many interests, and not just one specialty or talent. We see a new breed of superhero in kids like Greg—Renaissance Boy! —Sarah Chumsky and the team at Insight Kids

Insight Kids is a research and strategic consulting company dedicated to the development of innovative, impactful and inspiring experiences for kids and families, where you live and around the world. To be further inspired find us at www.insightkids.com or www.insightkidsblog.com or email thegrownups@insightkids.com.

Cool or Not? The Disney Channel starlets' edition



Bella Thorne
(*Shake It Up*)

	Boys 8 to 11 (104)	Girls 8 to 11 (121)	Boys 12 to 15 (115)	Girls 12 to 15 (110)		Boys 8 to 11 (193)	Girls 8 to 11 (225)	Boys 12 to 15 (217)	Girls 12 to 15 (232)
	20.2%	40.5%	12.2%	23.6%	Totally way cool *	20.7%	34.2%	13.8%	16.4%
	9.6%	24%	7.8%	17.3%	Very cool *	9.8%	19.1%	12%	10.3%
	25%	17.4%	29.6%	30%	Kinda cool *	20.2%	22.7%	23%	29.7%
	15.4%	6.6%	28.7%	12.7%	Not cool *	19.7%	6.7%	19.4%	24.1%
	29.8%	11.6%	21.7%	16.4%	Totally un-cool *	29.5%	17.3%	31.8%	19.4%
	56.3%	50%	53.6%	55.3%	Don't know who it is	18.2%	7%	12.1%	4.9%



Demi Lovato
(*Sonny with a Chance*)



Cool or Not? is part of KidSay's Feb/March 2011 Trend Tracker. These one-of-a-kind research reports are published 10 times a year and provide a quantitative and qualitative picture of kids' likes, dislikes and trends gathered through in-school surveys with US kids ages five to 15. Contact Bob Reynolds at 913-390-8110 or email bob@kidsay.com.

K2

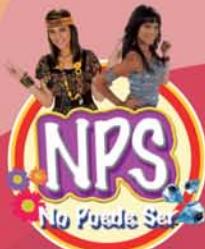


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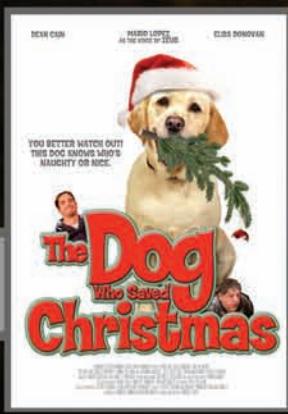
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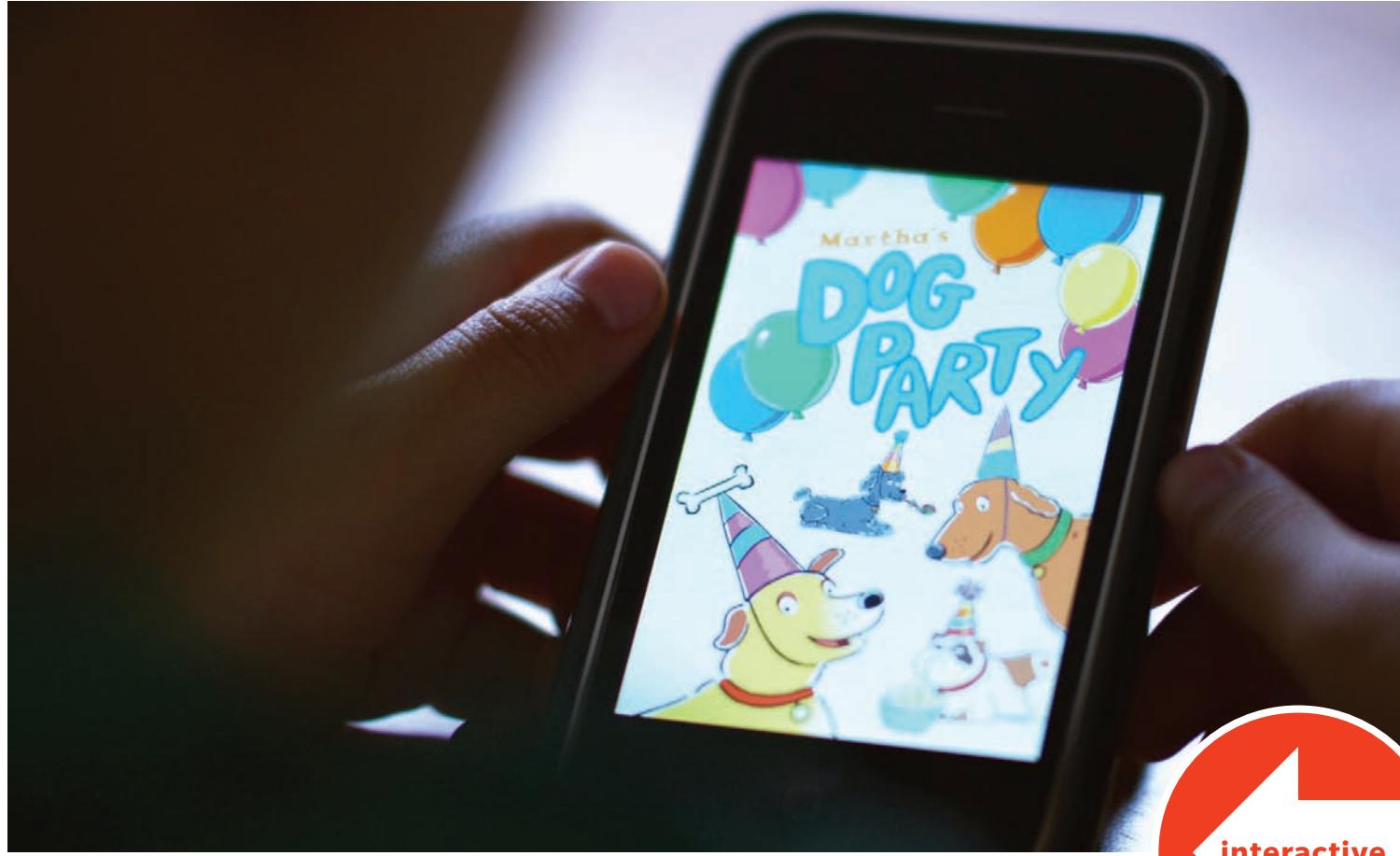
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Wired to learn

BY WENDY GOLDMAN GETZLER

If they're capable of being as educational as they are entertaining, will learning-based apps actually make kids smarter earlier?

Peer into the odd minivan and you're bound to find a bucket-seated toddler swiping his or her tiny fingers across the screen of a sophisticated device like an iPad or iPhone. This phenomenon of young children playing with their parents' mobile devices—aptly called the pass-back effect—has become so pervasive that it's sparked questions about whether or not kids can actually glean educational value and accelerate their developmental milestones by fiddling around with learning-based apps. The debate is only beginning to be explored by emerging studies and reinforced through a slew of new preschool-targeted games designed to hone specific skills such as speech. While the jury is still out when it comes to determining if kids are actually becoming smarter at an earlier age, researchers and mobile developers seem to agree that intuitive mobile devices and properly developed apps are making it easier to augment preschoolers' pre-existing skills.

"There are a lot of apps on the market that claim to be educational. Many are and many are not," says Carly Shuler, an industry analyst working for the Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop. "We don't know yet

which are validated by research and which are just being marketed that way." What Shuler's fall 2010 study *Learning: Is There An App For That?* did show is that American kids have the potential to benefit educationally from properly designed apps.

The study—which focused on PBS Kids' *Martha Speaks* and *Super Why!* iPhone and iPod Touch learning-based games—is the product of a children's app market that has experienced exponential growth over the past two years. At the time of the study, 60% of the top-25 bestselling apps on iTunes targeted toddlers and preschoolers. While 66% of smartphone-owning parents are handing over their devices, they're not completely sold on the idea of kids using them as learning tools. But learning tools they have become. The study found that 14% of three-year-olds improved their comprehensive vocabulary skills by using the *Martha Speaks* app, which is designed to bolster vocabulary and literary skills for preschoolers. And more than 50% of the four- to seven-year-olds of various socio-economic backgrounds surveyed were inherently able to figure out the iPod Touch almost instantly.

The research also found that the most successful educational apps consider a child's evolving motor skills,



Words of encouragment:
Shamba promotes vocab development for preschoolers

feature content that is narrowly tailored to a specific developmental age, link context to what children are already learning in the outside world, engage kids through laughter but are not necessarily edutainment, provide incentives, and offer shorter playing times. When these characteristics are properly implemented, Shuler believes that apps can have the same perception-altering affect on parents as *Sesame Street* has had over its past four decades on-air. "I am hoping that more industry and game developers will partner with curriculum developers, researchers and psychologists on app development," says Shuler. "You need to test everything with kids, and that knowledge helps inform the field."

Michael LeFort and his team at Brooklyn-based Mammalfish are already heeding that advice. The digital creative studio, which has developed mobile games for media companies like HIT Entertainment and Publications International Limited, is collaborating with Thomas Brothers Interactive, also in Brooklyn, and a number of development professionals to launch *Shamba*. This voice-recognition app is designed to help preschoolers sharpen their speaking skills.

"We've learned that kids enjoy fun, interactive and instantly rewarding content. But what also gets Apple excited is the opportunity to bring kids and parents together through learning tools," says LeFort. The app's main character, Shamba the "phonic fox," prompts kids ages two to seven to say words aloud and responds with either applause or further encouragement. The app recognizes words in their simplest forms based on vocal pitch, attaching corresponding 3-D objects to each word on-screen.

Mammalfish teamed with speech pathologists and audiologists to develop a vocabulary that varies from monosyllabic words to complex phrasing. The game is also the by-product of multiple focus group sessions and served as a catalyst in the establishment of Little Fish, the company's new study work group that performs usability testing with children. "It's monumental to stay within age-appropriate parameters," says LeFort, citing a recent

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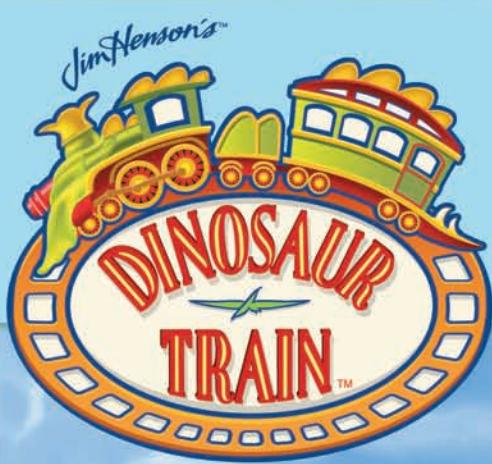


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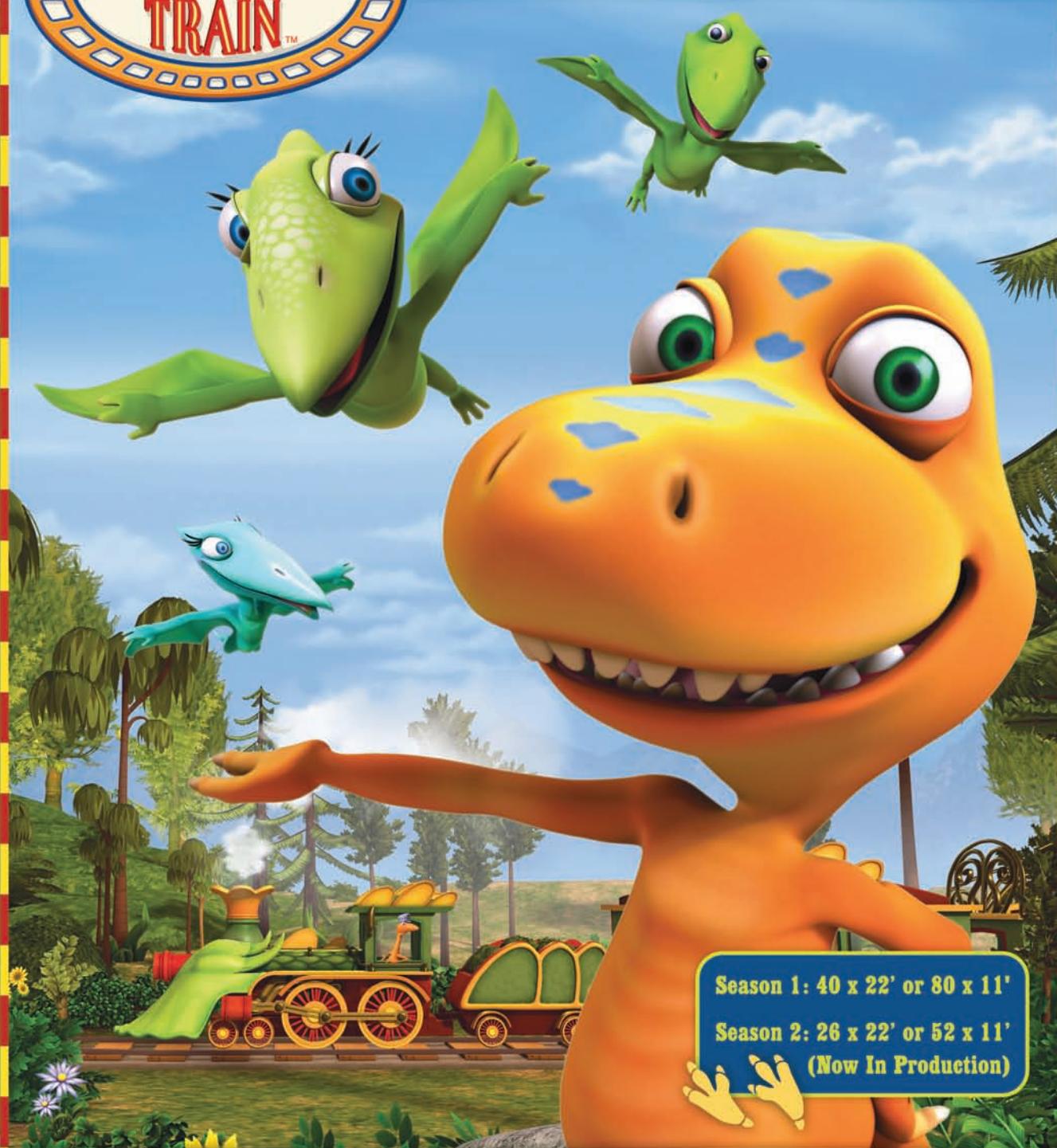
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example where his company developed a children's app that proved to be too difficult for its intended audience. "If we don't overstep and use the tools of today to augment the lessons of yesterday, then we can all benefit," he contends.

As a consultant to app developers and marketing companies, Gary Pope, director of UK-based Kids Industries, cautions clients about overestimating the physical and cognitive abilities of young children in the digital age. "The human brain has been the same for 150,000 years," he says. "The fact that some clever people in California have made a device that humankind has been waiting for since the first Mac does not mean the next generation is ready to pilot the Starship Enterprise." Broadly speaking, he adds, three-year-olds are in a pre-logical phase of development "and no amount of app play is ever going to make that change."

Still, Pope does believe that the intuitive nature of Apple devices makes them an extremely age-appropriate tool for preschoolers. For instance, the act of coloring on an iPad is actually made easier than on paper since kids use their fingers and don't have to worry about how to grip a crayon. "Kids are doing the same thing with these apps that they would be without them, only very often it is made easier by the device," he says.

And with that in mind, Pope believes that the right apps can provide real educational value in terms of

honing skills while simultaneously providing entertainment. He explains their prime educational value lies in the relatively simple "swipe-and-go" portable nature of iPhones and iPads. "Ease is key to learning, and there's a lot of ease in an iPad."

Of course, there is currently a digital chasm separating kids who have access to the devices and those who do not, and the debate over the educational value of apps lends itself to larger questions surrounding

"Ease is key to learning, and there's a lot of ease in an iPad"

—Gary Pope, Kids Industries

technological equality. While pilot projects are already putting iPads into global curriculums, the Cooney Center's Shuler believes that a large cultural shift needs to take place before a mainstream educational one becomes possible. She says that given the affordability of many mobile devices and their 99-cent apps, now is the time to start closing—not expanding—the digital divide. ☀



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New Kid in Town

Niche networks

Content aggregator Kidobi gets personal with online TV

of a mouse. Over the past two years, the company has refocused its full attention and resources toward fine-tuning what it deems a revolutionary customizable online viewing tool.

The software Kidobi is a video player that aggregates personalized educational video content for kids. For roughly US\$4 a month, parents can register details about their child's interests and skills, and Kidobi sets off to create a tailored programming block from third-party content producers. Henning is also touting the value in Kidobi's reporting tools, which provide insight into viewing patterns. "With technology today we can make that leap from broad programming to content being more precise, appropriate and relevant," says Eric Sorenson, director of research and content at Henning. "Subscription-based models like Netflix and the ubiquity of computers leave huge opportunities because consumers are ready for this transition."

The next phase The company intends to launch Kidobi in North America this spring prior to rolling it out internationally in 2012 and plans to attract viewers through traditional and social media marketing tactics. The startup is looking to grow its library, which at launch time will be stocked by partners like The Children's Group and WeeHands, and is banking on the software's valuable audience-measurement features to draw in additional content providers. "The analytics and reporting data is so rich and age-specific that companies can put a pilot episode on Kidobi and see that while it may be intended for four-year-olds, six-year-olds really love it," says Sorenson. "We're always looking for more content. That's our focus for now."

—Wendy Goldman Getzler

The spark Leo Henning drew inspiration for his new online viewing tool Kidobi from his own life experiences. The Toronto, Canada-based software company founder wanted to create an age-appropriate video playlist for his young daughter and found the task of gathering online content to be arduous and time-consuming. His team of 10 at Henning Software Solutions set off to create a program for parents that would let them curate age-specific content for their kids with the click

of a mouse. Over the past two years, the company has refocused its full attention and resources toward fine-tuning what it deems a revolutionary customizable online viewing tool.

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—Wendy Goldman Getzler

The Digits

Numbers that speak volumes about kids and technology

Email usage among kids ages 12 to 17 **24%** in 2010. (comScore)

Network hardware giant Cisco expects **5.6 billion** web-enabled mobile devices to be on the global market by 2015. (Cisco)



Kids access TV content **33%** more often on their iPads than they do on any other connected device. (Nielsen)

Despite Facebook's age requirements,

28% of eight- to 12-year-olds in the US are using the social network. (Harris Interactive)

4.7 million roughly six- to 17-year-olds in the UK went online in January, accounting for 12% of the entire UK internet population. (UKOM)



TechWatch Keeping an eye on the gadget scene

IntoNow checks out TV market

What it is

As the latest contender in the growing location-based social networking space, IntoNow has a youth-friendly twist that allows users to virtually "check in" to TV programs from the comfort of their own homes. The free companion app from the California-based startup of the same name is now currently available to consumers in the US through the iTunes store.

What it does

Based on the company's patented SoundPrint music recognition platform, IntoNow uses audio software to instantly recognize TV content, which can then be shared and discussed on social streams like Facebook. The app provides data and links associated with episodes it recognizes from an index of more than 140 million minutes of broadcast TV from the past five years.

What it means

The technology can undoubtedly add a new layer of social interaction to the TV-watching habits of tweens and teens who are increasingly connecting with one another through mobile devices and social networks. Given the public nature of the service, IntoNow intends to build more granular privacy controls while expanding its content-recognition reach.



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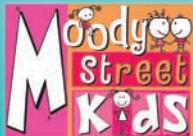
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Select segments

BY WENDY GOLDMAN GETZLER WITH RESEARCH FROM INSIGHT KIDS



Research firm Insight Kids delivers an in-depth look inside the cognitive and social drivers that influence the media habits and content preferences of key kids demos—namely four-, seven- and 11-year-olds—around the globe

When it comes to children, there are certain universal truths that transcend cultural differences. Emotions like fear, happiness and sadness are experienced by all kids, regardless of circumstance, yet there are so many cultural factors—think parenting styles and aesthetic tastes—that have an impact on how they interact with media. And with media options and access growing rapidly, opportunities abound to reach kids and tailor experiences to meet their needs. With that in mind, New York-based research and consulting firm Insight Kids recently pooled more than a decade's worth of its research with current findings from France-based Eurodata TV Worldwide to anchor a session at Kidscreen Summit 2011 that examined what content creators need to know about child development in order to create inspiring media for kids.

The research company's focus both then and now is tied to the importance of understanding who kids are cognitively, socially and emotionally, and how this identity fits into the current cultural context. "More so than any other generation, kids are growing up in a world that is driven by media and technology, and this impacts almost all aspects of their lives, including how they learn, play and communicate," says Stacey Matthias, co-founder of Insight Kids. "Playtime, for one, has broadened to include an array of digital options. Role-playing games have now extended into avatar-based gaming on social networks, and video games like *Wii Sports* are competing with outdoor sport activities." Still, while the platforms used as sources of entertainment may be different and ever-expanding, Matthias contends that their basic role is constant in that they foster exploration and expression. In fact, creating inspiring experiences for kids boils down to two key "kidg redients," says Insight Kids. One is to help kids do the work of growing up, and that requires an understanding of children's needs. The second is to help kids have fun, which necessitates comprehension of what sparks their imagination. And shining a spotlight on three narrow audience segments that punch above their weight when it comes to influencing programming decisions might just help widen perceptions about what constitutes appropriate and engaging content.

4s—The curious crafters

Socially and emotionally, four-year-olds relish in pretending and/or playing dress-up, even with imaginary playmates. And while they often seek adult approval, they increasingly exercise their independence and are eager to perform tasks on their own. With this independence comes a better understanding of danger and a greater tendency to fear things like the dark or monsters. Cognitively, kids at this age can devote up to 10 or 15 minutes on a given activity and are naturally process-oriented, living in the moment rather than focusing on a successful outcome. They are also beginning to grasp the differences between reality and fantasy, as well as the significance of time. They are quite capable of speaking in full sentences, but this age group is often known for the over-use of one singular word—why.

Generally speaking, while four-year-old girls tend to play face-to-face and focus on each other, boys are often more interested in playing side-by-side while fixated on a third object. And though girls are more inclined to play games that help them explore relationships, boys often choose games and toys that are physical and action-oriented. (Of course, all kids develop at their own unique rate and the generalizations about gender differences in childhood development may often not apply.)

Given their established play patterns and developmental abilities, Insight Kids has found that the most engaging media for this age set is above all else nurturing. To get these preschoolers to engage with a property, they have to understand it first. Programming should revolve around familiar and relatable settings, characters and activities. The best shows have a pace that's slow enough to allow kids to mentally digest what they are viewing. A predictable format also helps kids follow along, and programming should present clear take-away messages that are packaged with a simple look and feel. Since kids this age learn by seeing first and foremost, events and messages should be communicated visually as well as verbally. Well-written stories that have a clear beginning, middle and end are absolutely necessary, as are well-presented obstacles that they struggle with in their everyday lives, like learning to take turns or feeling shy.

Many of these qualities are found in global series that rank highly with this age group, according to ratings agency Eurodata TV Worldwide. *Dinosaur Train* (Finland, Norway), *Tom and Jerry* (Russia, Italy), *Winx Club* (Russia, South Africa), *Bernard* (Indonesia, Spain), *Shaun the Sheep* (Norway, Sweden) and *The Penguins of Madagascar* (Italy, Sweden) are engaging four-year-olds all over the world.

Not just for grown-ups

Look who's watching adult-targeted shows

- In Russia, 358,800 children ages four to nine are watching *Everybody Loves Raymond*
- 470,000 Indonesian kids ages five to nine tune into *Princess Exchanged* regularly
- *The X Factor* draws 468,300 children ages four to six in the UK on average
- US football league *The NFL* attracts roughly 947,300 two-to-five-year-old viewers per game
- In Italy, 241,900 children ages four to seven catch *I Cesaroni*
- *Generations* keeps an average of 554,800 four- to six-year-olds in South Africa entertained

Source: Eurodata TV Worldwide September to November 2010



Tess Foster had her whole life ahead of her,
and then she was sentenced to...

Life with Boys



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FROM MICHAEL PORYES
CO-CREATOR AND EXECUTIVE PRODUCER OF
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7s—The try again-ers

Seven-year-olds are building social attachments while also developing a stronger sense of who they are. Sensitivity really kicks in at this age, as kids begin to form gender identity and also become more conscious of being liked as individuals. Cognitively, they thrive on order and orderly thinking, and therefore, love to collect and organize. This group is still mostly process-oriented and is increasingly developing inferences based on concrete observations. Gender differences are also becoming more pronounced now. Boys, for example, often play in large groups, choose games that are more competitive and complex, and participate in fantasy play that revolves around high stakes and action. Girls, meanwhile, prefer to play in pairs or with a best friend, with whom they choose games that are more collaborative in nature. Girls also participate in fantasy play, but they tend to eschew action for the drama involved with personal relationships.

With the developmental stage in mind, Insight Kids contends that the most engaging media for this age group offers the chance for safe risk-taking. Shows that break the rules just slightly, like *Phineas and Ferb* and *Mythbusters*, appeal to this demographic, as do interactive programs in the mold of *American Idol*, which taps into their increasing desire for control over situations. Sticky content also helps seven-year-olds apply what they see to their own lives. Social and playground currency holds sway, as kids are now starting to be interested in shows or properties that they can talk about with their friends and from which they can extract “inside jokes.” Series that make a strong distinction between good and evil also appeal to seven-year-olds as they are not moved by subtlety.

A look at some of the most popular programming, as determined by Eurodata TV, bears this research out. In the US, for example, tween-targeted *iCarly* (Nickelodeon) is the most popular series for kids ages six to nine. The show is aspirational—younger kids feel cool for watching what older kids are doing. “They are likely not taking in the same level of information that older kids are,” says Insight Kids director Sarah Chumsky. “For instance, the show’s jokes are not as relatable [for seven-year-olds], nor is what the characters are doing, such as creating their own websites and having crushes. Still, it’s layered enough to include younger kids, with gross-out messes like spaghetti tacos.”



The Penguins of Madagascar

**is the most universally popular TV series
for kids ages six to nine**

Source: Eurodata TV Worldwide

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11s—Collaborative connectors

"Kids who are 11 are just that, kids. And their developmental stage is often overestimated by more mature programming," says Matthias.

Children at this age are starting to have more of an identity within their social circle and in the online social space. They are also beginning to worry about body image and are becoming more self-conscious about being cool enough. Cognitively, this group can grasp delayed gratification and is able to think about the future. They can categorize with more abstract and complex thinking, and therefore can understand concepts without having direct experiences. They may also begin to challenge the rules, which is why they crave content that pushes the boundaries with naughty jokes and depicts situations with real physical and social stakes.

Particularly for this age group, cultural filters need to be in place as kids are more aware of themselves and their surroundings. While there are universal funnies that transcend economic, social and geographical factors, humor that flies in Asia may elicit blank stares from those in South America, especially if the jokes riff on cultural norms. Shows like *The Simpsons*, for instance, successfully speak to this age group on a global level because kids can relate to both its slapstick humor and the gender-reinforcing qualities of protagonists Bart and Lisa. The former allows kids to overstep the rules and make jokes, while the latter embodies social awareness and the ability to shape the world. In fact, kids at this age are interested in making a difference, which is why age-appropriate news shows are well-received—they provide kids with the ability to mobilize against an issue.

Eleven-year-olds use media to explore budding romantic relationships, too. They watch their favorite characters experience first crushes and kisses, and in this way learn how to manage their own interactions. And while these kids are exploring the opposite sex and their independence, they still rely on structure. As such, the presence of role models like parents, coaches and teachers should be important fixtures in programming targeting this group. Pop-culture references deemed to be trendy or cool are also going to strike a chord with the demo. Overall, the most engaging media supports their looming transition from kids to teens.

"Content creators need to be thinking of kids as muses in the creative process," contends Matthias, concluding that an understanding of who kids are today can drive inspiration for sticky media experiences in the years ahead.

The top-five universal shows for tweens

The Simpsons (Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Norway, Sweden, UK)

Hannah Montana (Canada, Germany)

Wizards of Waverly Place (Canada, Germany, UK)

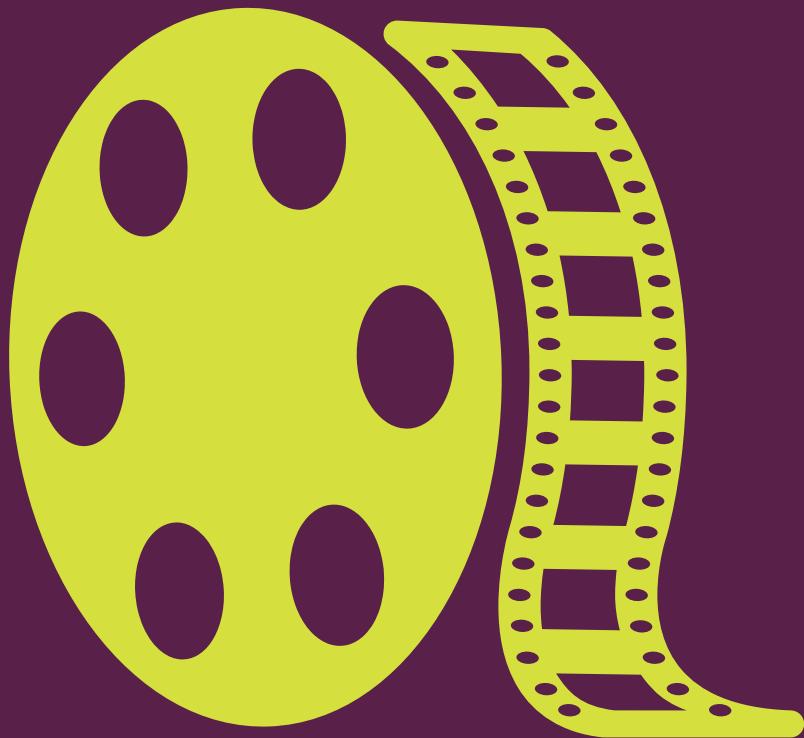
The Suite Life on Deck (Canada, Germany)

Family Guy (Canada, Sweden)

Source: Eurodata TV Worldwide



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BY LANA CASTLEMAN



6 to 11

In the Belly of a Giant

Producer Paris-based Alphanim

Style Digital 2-D animation

Format 52 x 11 minutes

Budget US\$350,000/half hour

Status Still in early development, Alphanim has worked up a bible, initial character design and script ideas. It's now starting to pitch potential co-pro and broadcast partners.

Delivery TBD

Concept Pure character-driven comedy with a squash-and-stretch approach is the name of the game for this series created by small Belgium-based prodco Eugene and Louise. Picked up by Alphanim creative director Heath Kenny at MIPCOM last fall, the story begins when young Waldo gets sniffed up the nose of a giant and lands in the creature's stomach, also known as the strange world of Belly Ville Valley. There he meets Buckaroo, a wannabe ice cream salesman, who ironically has neither ice cream nor sales experience. The two become fast friends and it's the juxtaposition of Waldo's can-do enthusiasm and Buckaroo's innate laziness that propels the laughs. In fact, much of the situational comedy comes from playing off the differences between unlikely pairings. For example, there's a cursed Viking and a similarly doomed pirate who are fused together by their beards, and resident bad guy Sludge, who covets Belly Ville's trash but is also germ-phobic, is in cahoots with a cowardly sheriff who couldn't keep law and order if his life depended upon it.

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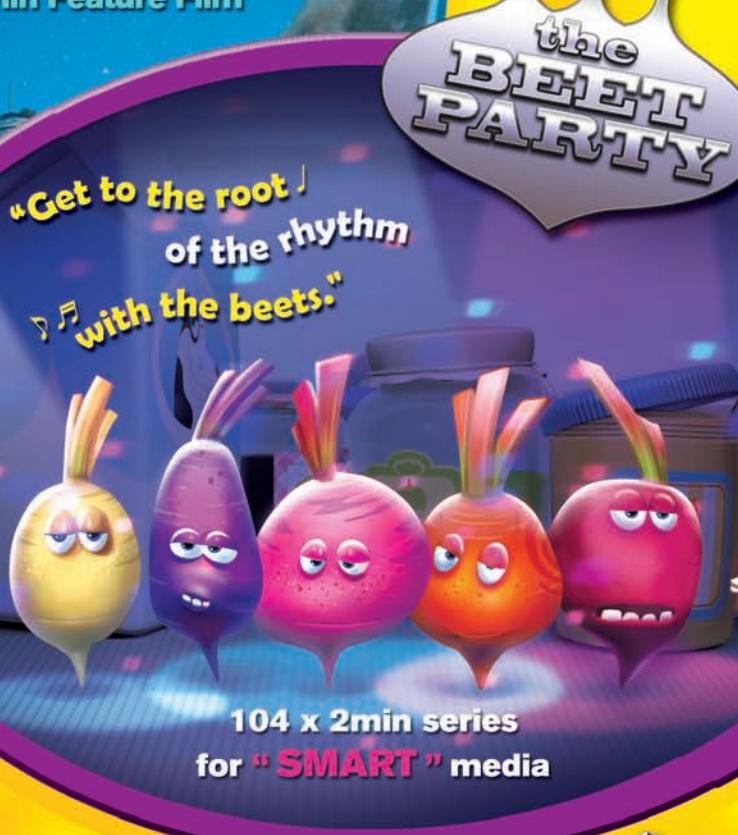
90min Feature Film
52 x 11min series



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104 x 2min series
for "SMART" media



4D

Pirata & Capitano

Producer Madrid, Spain-based Vodka Capital

Style CGI animation

Format 52 x 11 minutes

Budget US\$11.2 million

Status With roughly 50% of the budget raised, and character designs and initial script ideas in-hand, Vodka is looking at co-pro scenarios to trigger pre-production by the end of this year.

Delivery Spring/summer 2013

Concept This preschool series targeting the over-three crowd is the brainchild of Vodka Capital's David Cantolla, who co-created *Pocoyo* during his tenure at Spanish prodco Zinkia. Vodka MD Steven Posner says the idea for this comic adventure series starring Pirata (a.k.a. "a pink Jack Sparrow") and her sometimes reticent pilot pal Capitano, really came out of a perceived hole in the market. Just finishing up production on its first series *Jelly Jamm* (sold internationally to Turner's Boomerang), Posner says the company saw "a bit of a gap between very young-skewing/babyish preschool series and programs for older kids that three- and four-year-olds are falling into." In each ep, the spritely pirate and amiable pilot embark on a



preschool

treasure hunt for an ultimate bounty that serves as a metaphor for the social/emotional values that the stylish show's trying to impart. But it will also contain a lot of original music to further strengthen the concept. Various digital offshoots that have yet to be fully mapped out are also part of the plan, thanks to Vodka's in-house expertise in website and gaming design.



Fleabag Monkeyface

Co-producers London's Walker Productions and Impossible Kids and Sparky Animation in Singapore

Style CGI

Format 52 x 11 minutes

Budget Roughly US\$276,500 per half hour

Status As the first original commission made by UK broadcaster ITV/CiTV in five years or so, the series is in production and is being prepped for the international sales market.

Delivery Fall 2011

Concept Based on a six-book series published by UK house Walker Books and penned by the writing team Knife and Packer, this gross-out comedy finds Fleabag Monkeyface at the center of a trio of friends under constant threat from resident evil genius, Dr. Dirk Spamflex. You see, pals Gene and Gerald unwittingly created Fleabag while they were attempting to concoct the most disgusting gloop known to man by stuffing all kinds of rotting organic material into an unused toilet that then gets struck by lightning. Fleabag emerges from the wreckage able to knock over buildings with his belches and fly, propelled by his super-powered farts. In essence, he lives out the fantasies of Gene, Gerald and most tween boys. And while he has the brainpower to wreak global havoc, Dr. Spamflex is singularly fixated on reclaiming the trio's TV slot (the boys are the hosts of *Gross Out TV*, naturally) for his cancelled series, *Yucky Science*—much to amusement of the audience.

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52X11 minutes
Animated
Pre-school Series

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Redakai: Conquer the Kairu

Co-producers Paris-based Marathon Media for Zodiak Kids and Spin Master Entertainment in Toronto, Canada

Style 2-D animation

Format 52 x half hours

Budget US\$20 million

Status An A-list lineup of broadcasters, including Cartoon Network US, YTV (Canada) and Canal J/Gulli (France) is on-board for this series making its international sales debut at MIPTV.

Delivery Fall 2011

Concept According to GM David Michel, Marathon Media (now under the Zodiak Kids umbrella) and toyco Spin Master's entertainment arm had been looking at doing a project together for a few years. Michel and CEO Vincent Chalvon-Demersay then hatched the idea for this boy-targeted series. "From a story perspective, most toy-oriented shows are pure action and we wanted to go for something more quest-like where the main characters go through an initiation, encounter ordeals along the way and have their powers grow," says Michel. "That's what's different about *Redakai*." In this case, three teenage trainees of an ancient martial art that revolves around mastering a supernatural energy called the Kairu must travel the globe in



boys
6 to 11

search of its stolen shards scattered around the Earth. It turns out there are all sorts of extraterrestrial teens looking for the same thing, driving the action-adventure forward. Visually, Michel says his team opted to create worlds crafted by painting over photos, giving the series' settings a distinct, almost photo-real look. Spin Master's parent toyco is working on a trading card game and toy line. Cartoon Network Enterprises will handle L&M in North America, while the Zodiak Kids licensing arm will look after all other territories.



kids
6 to 9

Anne's Droids

Producer Toronto, Canada's Sinking Ship Entertainment

Style Live action/CGI animation

Format 52 x 11 minutes

Budget US\$300,000/half hour

Status Sinking Ship just finished showing the self-financed series' pilot around at Kidscreen Summit in February and is currently evaluating interest from potential US and Canadian broadcast partners.

Delivery Fall 2012

Concept With production on its first live-action/CGI hybrid *Dino Dan* winding down, Sinking Ship partner J.J. Johnson says he was looking to do something science-based that would capture the attention of the six to nine demo that he feels is often overlooked when it comes to programming. "They're a magical group of kids who still believe in things and haven't lost that innocence," he contends. And what better than a series about a hyper-intelligent girl named Anne who creates three android helpers to assist her in carrying out experiments that also demonstrate fundamental scientific principles? Throw in an inquisitive foil in the form of neighborhood boy Nick—Mulder to Anne's Scully, if you will—who happens upon the girl's junkyard laboratory by accident, a Steam Punk aesthetic and electronic soundtrack, and you've got the makings of a fun, "soft-e" educational series that should pique kids' curiosities.

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Twilight's Jackson Rathbone leads a star-studded cast in Dolphin Digital's *Alm High*, produced exclusively for streaming online

Series evolution

BY KATE CALDER

As the rate at which kids watch video online climbs, internet portals are on the hunt for exclusive content to engage visitors. The good news? There seems to be a business model emerging for the production of web-only shows.

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Come on. Everybody's doing it. Well, at least 175 million internet users in the US alone watched video content online this past September (logging 14.4 hours per viewer), and the total US internet audience engaged in more than 5.2 billion video-viewing sessions during that same month, according to comScore Video Metrix. And last month, the Reston, Virginia-based research firm reported that the US online-video audience grew by 32% in 2010. And while these stats reflect the population at large, kid viewers are included in the mix, and are perhaps the most platform-agnostic when it comes to consuming entertainment.

Of course, kidcasters and producers haven't been slow to meet the demand for online video—they've been repurposing, repackaging and rescreening their content on all types of web-enabled screens for years now. What's just bubbling

Six nine minute eps will debut exclusively online in early summer. And Miami, Florida-based producer Dolphin Entertainment (*Zoey 101, What's up Warthogs!*) set up new division Dolphin Digital Studios to shepherd the project, which is being co-financed through an agreement with Warner Bros. Digital Distribution.

"We've announced that we've created a studio division for these [types of projects] and we intend to make six or so of them a year because it's a business in and of itself," says Bill O'Dowd, executive producer at Dolphin. He adds the company is looking to tap into the tween and young adult trend of watching high-quality programming that premieres online before moving to traditional TV and home entertainment windows.

With the cast in place and production well underway, Dolphin and Warner Bros. have a new distribution and



When it's too much for TV...

As Ken Anderson, founder and producer at Edinburgh, Scotland-based Red Kite Animation, was looking at the specs for animated series *Ask Lara*, he knew it would be tough to place. He didn't think UK broadcasters would be quite ready for the 16 x 11-minute series that presents a frank picture of puberty from a girl's point of view to kids ages nine to 12.

So while Anderson says TVE in Spain and VTR in Holland are more open to screening the eps on-air, a territory like the UK that is somewhat conservative in nature, would likely plan to put the series online. And the national pubcaster BBC is on-board to create online components for the series in the educational market.

"It's TV-quality, but because of its nature, *Ask Lara* will have to find its niche in other places," says Anderson. "It's difficult, but the series is extremely compelling to kids because it's about them." Anderson says the first seven eps will be completed by the beginning of this month.

up, however, is a pool of kid-targeted content produced exclusively for the web that's gaining momentum with prodcos eager to tap into an open market, ride the transmedia wave and appeal to ad dollars that will invariably follow viewers online. Read on for a look at a cross-section of projects ranging from Hollywood-cast series to grassroots productions and broadcaster-supported online destinations, all taking first steps in creating their own models for web series.

High-profile projects

Aim High is a slick new live-action web series for tweens that revolves around high school student Nick Green, who juggles his social life and studies by day and is one of 64 highly trained teenage government operatives by night. The celebrity-stocked cast includes Jackson Rathbone (Jasper from *The Twilight Saga* trilogy) as Nick and Aimee Teegarden (*Friday Night Lights*) as his love interest.

business model in mind for the content. At press time, O'Dowd was in the midst of inking a deal with an online portal à la AOL or Yahoo—essentially a big player that already attracts millions of visits each day and is capable of drawing a much larger viewership than a dedicated series' site would. The pay-off for the hosting site, contends O'Dowd, is creating a stickier experience that will retain visitors for longer periods of time and attract more ad dollars. "If someone stays on the site to watch a nine-minute video that they can only see in an exclusive window, it's a good win-win for us and [the portal]."

Besides *Aim High*, Dolphin also has an apocalyptic drama for the 18 to 49 demo in the hopper called *H Plus*. Breaking new ground in terms of distribution, O'Dowd says "*Aim High* is going to get the buzz and excitement of being the first series in this joint-venture, but it will also be the one for which we'll know the least going in." He says

target
6 to 9
26x26'

HERO KIDS.™

Celebrity chef Cat Cora stars alongside new muppet Angelo in Disney.com short-form series *Muppets Kitchen*



he's in a unique position to have premium content for an online platform while being flexible when it comes to working out shared-compensation models. Given the freedom to experiment with content, produce quick shoots and get the show in front of a potentially huge audience, O'Dowd likens web series production to making indie feature films.

The web is the new indie

Indie also aptly describes *Ruby Skye P.I.*, another web-only concept targeting six- to 14-year-olds, created by Toronto, Canada-based Story2.OH and funded by the country's government-supported Independent Production Fund, which provides cash for digital media projects.

The live-action series stars a teen detective who gets to the bottom of everything she sees happening around her. Show runner and executive producer Jill Golick says the funding greenlit the first 12 eps budgeted for roughly US\$600,000—a price that Golick admits is high for a web project. But she contends it was necessary to reach for higher production values that would translate seamlessly to TV and theater screens.

"There's only a certain amount of shelf space for shows on TV and we see very little soap, mystery or sci-fi available to kids," says Golick. Creating a novel-like narrative for the web has allowed her to depict a deeper story and transmedia experience. For example, she's delving into peripheral characters, hatching a spin-off focused on Ruby's little sister, creating a Rock, Paper, Scissors-like game that's based on a thread running through the narrative, and carving out a space for the characters to respond to viewer comments in real time. "When your show is online, it's like reading to your kids at bedtime—there is immediate interaction and they tell you what they like," says Golick.

The episodes themselves are short (between three and seven minutes each), which Golick explains isn't necessary

for the kid audience, but is the norm for the medium. Short run times make it easier to post the content on free screening sites such as YouTube. Additionally, the abbreviated length translates more readily to mobile platforms.

Having the money to start production without broadcast investment has allowed Golick to not only experiment with content, but also to focus on the product first and find partners later, preserving more of her original vision than traditional financial setups often allow. So far, camera giant Polaroid has come on-board as a sponsor for the series, and Golick was able to integrate the company into the narrative. (Ruby often takes out her Polaroid Pogo to document suspicious happenings in her neighborhood, which get posted on a Flickr feed.) However, the show is upfront with its viewers about product integration. Golick is looking for partners to get a second season off the ground.

In the meantime, the prodco has lined up a distribution deal with KoldcastTV, a site similar to MingleMediaTV, DigitalChickTV or Clicker that broadcasts web series. Koldcast promotes the series on-site and via its social media feed, and offers pre-roll advertising and a revenue-sharing program for web content creators.

From indie to establishment

Independent studios on the cutting edge of transmedia storytelling aren't the only ones jumping on the web series bandwagon. For every indie going out on a limb to produce one, there's a broadcast-supported web-exclusive project already underway.

Over at the House of Mouse, Disney Interactive Media Group has created a web-only series starring The Muppets. *The Muppets Kitchen with Cat Cora* streams on seven- to 12-targeted Disney.com and features US celebrity chef Cat Cora and Angelo, a new Muppet created especially for the series. Simultaneously, *Hasty Tasty Cooking Tips with*

104x2'
TARGET 8-12

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Cat Cora and The Muppets, appearing on the media giant's parent-targeted DisneyFamily.com, repurposes the content, playing up the expert culinary tips provided by Cora for moms and dads.

"We have long format in the form of features and TV series on Disney Channel, so our focus on Disney.com is making short-form content that is more snackable and appealing to the kids demographic," says Jason Davis, VP of Disney.com. New episodes of *Muppets Kitchen* are released every two weeks and viewers can go back and watch eps they've missed.

"From a monetary standpoint, more of the focus ends up being around partnerships," says Davis. So for *Muppets Kitchen* on Disney.com the company partnered with the Got Milk ad campaign, while mom-focused *Hasty Tasty* drew Honda (promoting its Odyssey minivan) as its main sponsor.

Building a business model

Created by traditional TV prodco The Jim Henson Company, *Wilson & Ditch* is already going into its second season on PBSKidsGo.org. These two- to three-minute comic shorts revolve around two wacky gophers on a cross-country journey to explore and learn about American culture, history and geography. The pair drive an eco-friendly van, sharing experiences and real-world resources for kids ages six to 10. Funded by the US Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the series also includes online videos, interactive games, blogs, comics and podcasts posted by the gophers.

"Web series are fun for us because they can start out as character laboratories," says Peter Schube, COO at Henson. He adds, however, it's challenging to monetize and sustain a web-only project at this point. For the moment, Schube says PBSKidsGo.org, as the partner and online home of *Wilson & Ditch*, pays the equivalent of what a broadcaster would pay as a license fee. The studio then keeps production costs as close to that amount as possible. The company has also retained the right to take the project to other platforms, including merchandising and television. In fact, Henson is working up plans to expand *Wilson & Ditch* into a long-form TV series.

"We try to determine the right platform for a property in the first instance, and then we also make sure that what we're working on is susceptible to being ported over to other platforms," says Schube.

Making it work online

US pubcaster PBS has been experimenting with streaming video for the last two years on its PBSKids.org and PBSKidsGo.org sites. Last September, PBSKids.org was number-one among kids sites offering free video streams based on the number of videos viewed, according to data from comScore. Kids spent an average of 47 minutes watching content on the site, logging close to 88 million free video streams during that month.



Henson's curious gophers Wilson & Ditch dug America in their web shorts and are now headed for a full-series treatment

The broadcaster's online premiere of *WordGirl* shorts was so successful in 2005 that the Corporation for Public Broadcasting started providing cash for producers of web originals in an effort to experiment with different types of transmedia content creation. Linda Simensky, VP of children's programming, and Sara DeWitt, VP of PBS Kids interactive, share greenlighting duties between TV and online, and now look across platforms to develop exclusive online content. Three years ago, they put out request for proposals for web-series pitches.

Wilson & Ditch came out of that search, along with *Fizzy's Lunch Lab*, an animated series about health and nutrition that racked up 500,000 streams in its first five months on PBSKidsGo.org. The kidcaster has two additional web series in the works, thanks to a second RFP round that yielded 30 submissions. The first, *Noah Comprende*, is an animated short series and companion web games that deals with vocabulary development. The concept revolves around English-speaking Noah coming to terms with moving in with his grandmother who lives in a Spanish-speaking community.

Animated *Chuck Vanderchuck's Something Something Explosion*, meanwhile, is about a boy who has a band but can't make up his mind which genre of music it should play. The "something something" leaves an opening to feature a different type of music in each episode.

"All of our shows have some sort of curriculum—some work well on TV, but some may not work as well on that platform or be able to fill an entire order of half-hour episodes," says Simensky. "The web or apps are great options for teaching something in particular that may not work as well as a TV series."

Over the next several months, DeWitt says the team will look at traffic and how kids are engaging with the shows. She and Simensky will also explore whether the online formats are something they should bring into the preschool arena. **K**

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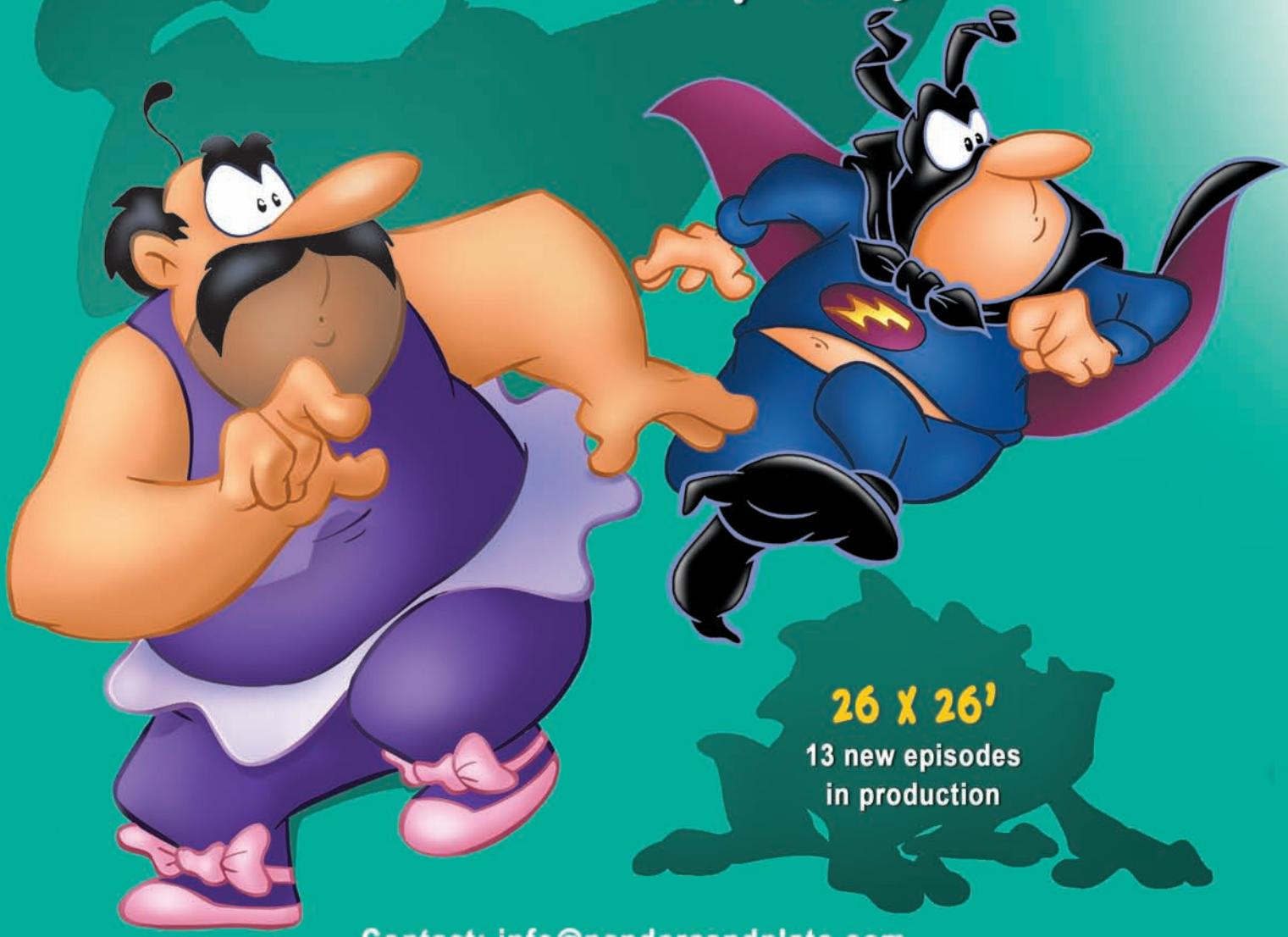
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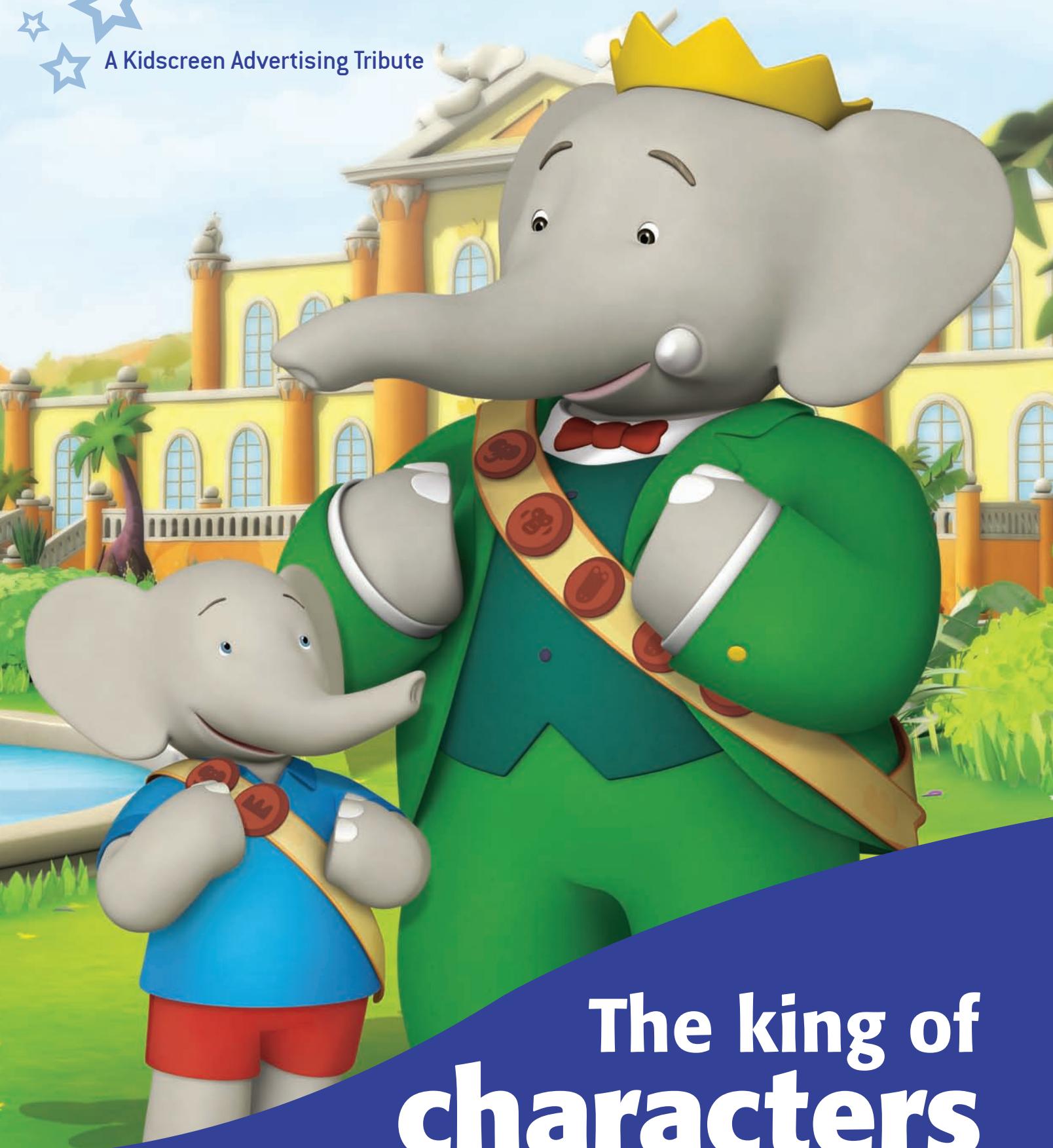
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A Kidscreen Advertising Tribute



The king of characters

Canadian animation pioneer Nelvana
celebrates 40 years of strategic success



By Kevin Ritchie

April 2011 **kidscreen N1**



This year, Babar the elephant celebrates his 80th birthday as a bona fide global brand recognized and loved by multiple generations the world over. It's a milestone achievement that some might not have predicted back in the mid-1980s, when Toronto-based animation studio Nelvana acquired the rights to produce an animated series based on French authors Jean and Laurent de Brunhoff's charming children's book series.

To be sure, Babar was beloved by readers and in kidlit circles, but the characters and their timeless stories of civilization and adopting the positive aspects of different ways of life had only existed in that dimension. And Nelvana was about to embark on a significant creative and strategic journey to translate the popular pachyderm property for the small screen.

Fast forward 10 years, and that reinvention story was still playing out. Nelvana had deftly expanded the IP to thrive not only as a 65-episode animated series that has gone on to air in 150 countries (including in the US on HBO Family), but also as a three-pack of long-form TV movies and a strong consumer

products program that floods the French market with 100 new products annually.

Three years ago, Nelvana began reimagining the elderly elephant once again when it noticed a void in programming that grandparents and grandchildren could enjoy together. That spark of a notion eventually led to *Babar and the Adventures of Badou*, a CGI-animated series currently airing on Disney Channel in the US, TF1 in France and Canada's YTV.

And looking ahead to the next leg of the property's journey, Nelvana and IP co-owner The Clifford Ross Company have teamed up with Twilight Saga producer Temple Hill to develop an family feature film that will mark Babar's move onto the big screen.

Just as Babar has proven to be a master of reinvention, so too has Nelvana, which has paved the way for independent Canadian film studios looking to make a mark internationally.

In the past four decades, the company has produced more than 4,000 animated half hours for series that have aired in 150 countries. These include *Babar*, *The Berenstain Bears*, *Franklin*, *The Backyardigans*,

Highlights from the journey...

Sep 18, 2000

Corus Entertainment announces its acquisition of Nelvana

Jul 25, 2001

Nelvana expands relationship with Nickelodeon, picking up international distribution rights to hit Nick series *The Fairly OddParents*

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Babar has gone from books to TV twice and now to the big screen

Max & Ruby, Pippi Longstocking, Rolie Polie Olie, Miss Spider's Sunny Patch Friends, Jacob Two-Two and Little Bear.

In the 10 years since founding partners Michael Hirsh, Patrick Loubert and Clive Smith sold the company to Corus Entertainment, the studio has weathered two economic downturns, successfully branched out into boys action, built up a robust licensing & merchandising division, and established strong partnerships with international producers and toy companies including Mattel, Hasbro, Spin Master, d-rights, TOMY and Sega.

Nelvana has grown from a small indie studio into a globally renowned kids entertainment powerhouse, operating integrated businesses in production, distribution, broadcast, digital media and consumer products that perform at world-class levels today.

While Nelvana has a long history of expansion, it really kicked into a new gear of exponential growth in the 1990s, which was also a tumultuous time for the broadcast industry. Kids programming began shifting from the terrestrial networks to newish cable upstarts like Nickelodeon, and it was Nelvana's earnest

Jan 1, 2002

Nelvana secures licensing and distribution rights to breakout Japanese IP *Beyblade*

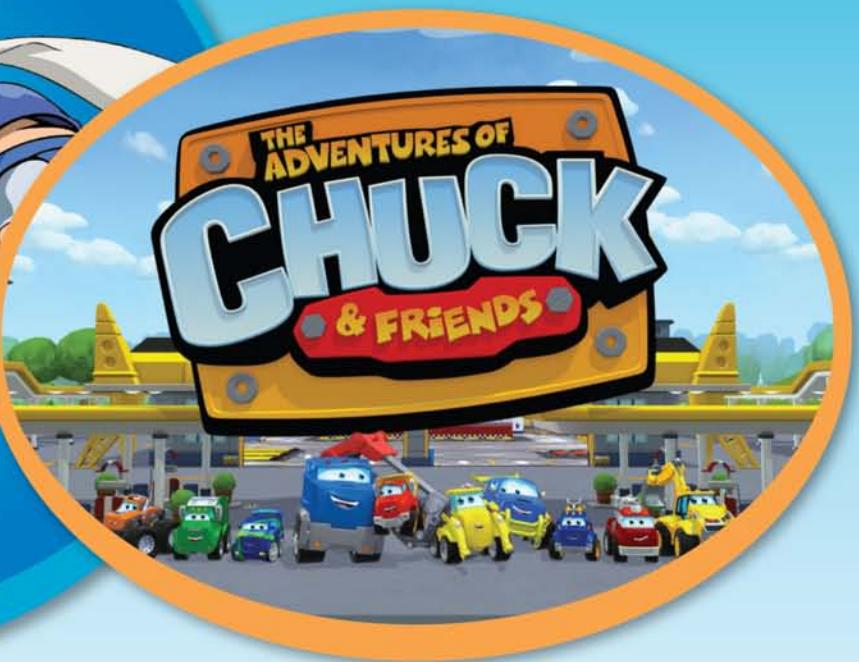
Nov 14, 2002

Nelvana's *The Berenstain Bears* premieres on PBS Kids

Jun 10, 2003

The world's hottest-selling toy property, *Beyblade*, is rated #1 with boys on ABC Family as an animated series, sparking second season *Beyblade VFORCE*





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turtle Franklin that showed the industry the power of cable.

In 1997, CBS was losing ad revenue during its Saturday morning block to Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network and Disney Channel and simply couldn't afford to pay the kind of license fees it did in the late '80s and early '90s. The FCC still required the network to air several hours of educational kids programming, so Nelvana made a deal to provide a three-hour block of content to the network. One of the shows in the mix was *Franklin*, a Canadian hit based on a popular book series that became the lowest-rated show in the history of CBS Saturday mornings.

Around the same time, Toper Taylor (who was then heading up the company's distribution efforts out of its L.A. office) received a call from Nickelodeon's Brown Johnson, now president of animation at the network, who needed to replace a canceled series with 26 episodes—stat. Taylor moved *Franklin* to Nick, where it grew into one of the channel's highest-rated preschool programs.

"To this day, that series resonates with its audience on Nick Jr.," says Taylor. "That was the very

beginning of understanding the power of not only Nickelodeon, but of cable television in general. It was a real eye-opener for all of us in the industry, and it was the nail in the coffin for the power of broadcast television in the kids space."

Today, the company has five shows airing on Nickelodeon, including *Franklin*, *Little Bear* and a hit musical show for preschoolers that Nelvana co-produced with the network. "*The Backyardigans* was quite a breakthrough from an animation perspective," says Teri Weiss, Nick's SVP of production and development for preschool television. "We shot real dancers choreographing the musical numbers and figured out a way with Nelvana to animate the characters over the real human dancers. When those characters dance, they have the movement and weight of what real kids look like."

When it went public in 1994, Nelvana was in a deficit-financing position with a management structure in place that was ill-suited to its public-company status. These two factors strained the relationship of the founding partners and was untenable in the long term. It couldn't continue to deliver the successes in



Franklin taught the biz about the power of cable

We expect to enjoy
with Nelvana the
40
yet to come!



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Mar 29, 2004

Nelvana partners with Oscar-winning Weta Workshop on *Jane and the Dragon* co-pro

Oct 4, 2004

Nelvana and Canada's leading preschool channel Treehouse launch home entertainment label Treehouse Presents

Oct 10, 2005

Nelvana, Alphanim, StudioCanal and Europool wade into co-producing a *Franklin* theatrical adaptation, directed by Oscar nominee Dominique Monfery

May 8, 2006

ION Media Networks, Scholastic, NBC Universal, Corus Entertainment and Classic Media unite to launch qubo channel

happy
40th



NELVANA

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A Kidscreen Advertising Tribute

production and merchandising it had grown accustomed to without merging with a larger entity. In 2000, the partners sold Nelvana to Corus Entertainment, a vertically integrated Canadian media giant with a strong focus on kids programming.

Taylor and Hirsh stayed on as consultants for a few years, until Corus brought in former Walt Disney Company exec Doug Murphy (now President of Television at the company) to serve as EVP alongside Scott Dyer in 2003, marking the beginning of a dynamic management phase that has triggered considerable change and growth at Nelvana.

Murphy had several goals for the company, including "stripping down excess costs that weren't additive so we could put more investment into content and into executives who could grow our business through new strategies." To that end, he and Dyer shut down Nelvana's offices in L.A., London and Tokyo and pared back its Paris operations to do business in the key territory more efficiently.

But one of Murphy's biggest priorities was to amp up Nelvana's consumer products strategy. Up to that point, development projects were greenlit based on the involvement of two broadcasters—usually one in the US and one in Canada. "Shows got made on a deficit-finance basis," says Murphy. "Then the distribution team that was in place at the time would try to sell it internationally to fill the hole."

Murphy hired a team of consumer products and home entertainment experts, many of whom came from Disney. "We took a hard look at the type of shows we were making," he says. "We wanted to focus on ones that had that special secret sauce." In other words, shows with distribution, merchandising and ratings potential.

Apr 2, 2007

Corus partners with NBC Universal and Cookie Jar to launch KidsCo, leveraging all three libraries to feed a 24/7 schedule of family-friendly programming

Jun 8, 2007

Nelvana announces that much-loved bunny siblings Max & Ruby will star in an off-Broadway musical stage show touring Canada and the US

Jan 8, 2008

KidsCo expands its global footprint to include the Philippines, Indonesia, South Korea, Hong Kong, South Africa, the Middle East...

Mar 14, 2008

...and Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Zambia, Ghana, Ethiopia, Botswana, Namibia, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Malawi and Zimbabwe

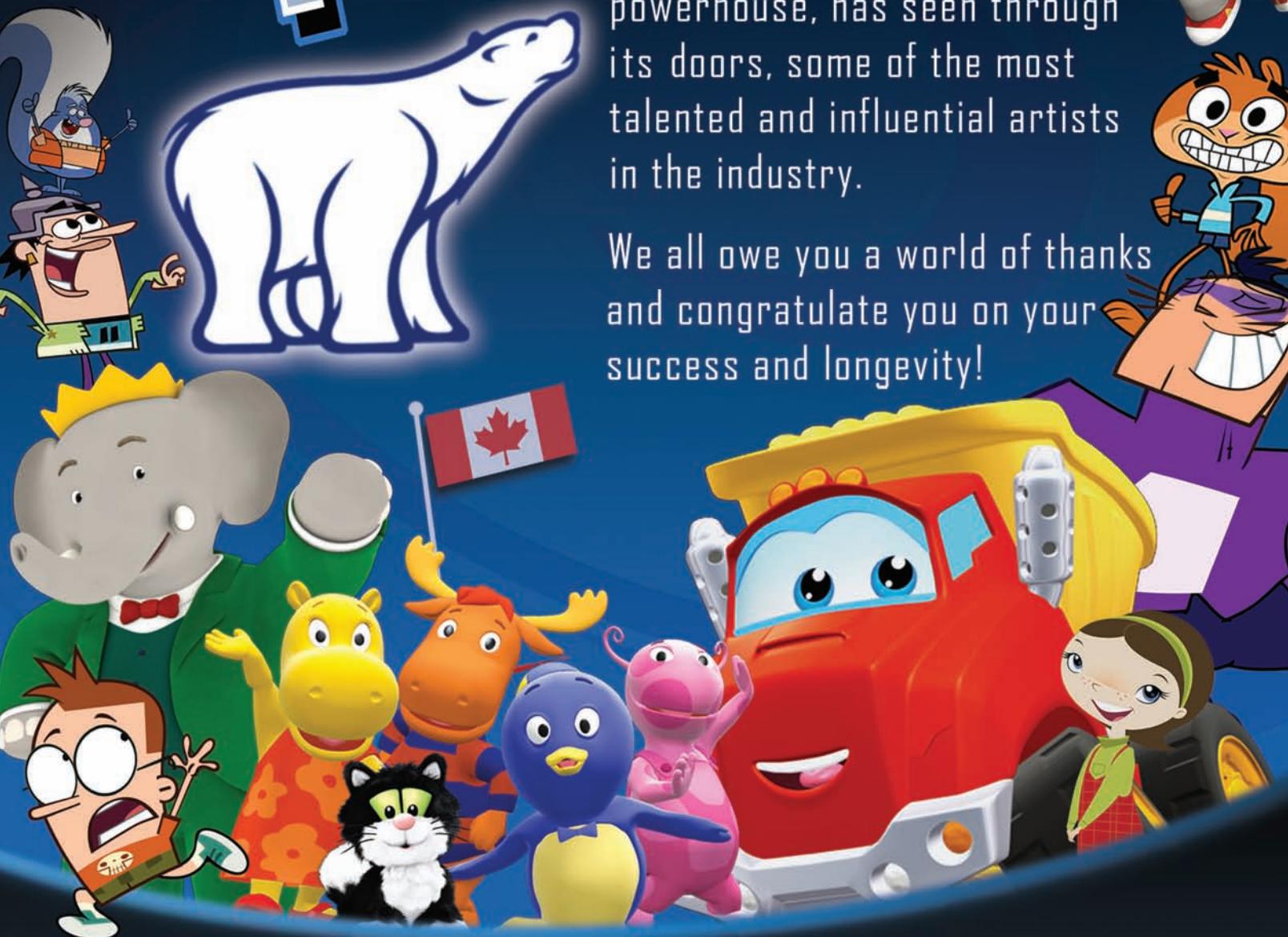
HAPPY BIRTHDAY NELVANA!

40

40 years ago they emerged from the barren wintery landscape and created an industry that continues growing to this day.

Nelvana, the Canadian animation powerhouse, has seen through its doors, some of the most talented and influential artists in the industry.

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Beyblade taps into the holy trinity of play: customize, collect & compete

First out of the gate with this new focus in mind—and marking Nelvana's move into a relatively unfamiliar content genre—was boys action property Beyblade.

Already a huge hit in Japan, Nelvana acquired distribution and L&M rights outside of Asia to the the edgy anime show, and started managing the IP in partnership with d-rights.

The TV concept revolves around a world inhabited by group of kids who battle against one another with customized spinning tops. Beginning with Beyblade: Metal Fusion, the new iteration of the Japanese series has spawned 100 half-hours, and currently airs on channels including Cartoon Network (US and Australia), Nickelodeon (Germany and the UK), and, naturally, YTV (Canada). Meanwhile, built on the holy trinity of boys play patterns—customization, collectibility and competition—Beyblade has been an even bigger success story in the

retail sphere. To date, more than 45 million of the tops have been sold worldwide, and upwards of 100 licensees are actively feeding a consumer products program that spans 45 countries.

Seven years after its initial global rollout, Beyblade is in the midst of a major second push to connect with a whole new generation of boys that has sprung up since the property's first run in the mid-2000s. This relaunch program hit Japan and Asia first in 2008, followed by Europe and the US last year. And Nelvana is planning to expand this footprint by another 22 territories by the end of 2011.

Online is a critical linchpin of the revival plan, offering fans easy self-serve access to everything they need to dive deep into the brand, from product and game details, show video, a "Beyblade 101" reel, key character profiles, virtual battling and more.

But it's not all new-school techniques in the marketing mix. Nelvana is still leaning heavily on the tours and demos that sampled the products and built a fan community so effectively the first time around. Regional Beyblade tournaments are in the works to start hitting the 22 new countries earmarked for expansion in 2011 this summer, featuring a combination of live and online gameplay. Winners will go on to compete nationally in the fall, and then at a world championship level in spring 2012.

**Congratulations, Nelvana,
On Your 40th Anniversary!**

We've Loved
Spending Time
With Our Favorite
Characters
On DVD.



We look forward to continuing with
The Adventures Of Tin Tin this year!



Oct 13, 2008

Nelvana, Mattel and Nerd Corps Entertainment start developing a *Hot Wheels* animated television series, destined for TELETOON Canada and Cartoon Network US

Feb 2009

Bakugan wins Toy of the Year, Boys Toy of the Year and Property of the Year at the Toy Industry Association Awards at Toy Fair in New York

Feb 24, 2009

Nelvana and Activision hook up to develop and distribute video games based on *Bakugan*



CONGRATULATIONS
ON 40 YEARS OF SUCCESS TO OUR FRIENDS AT NELVANA.





Bakugan
takes the
torch & moves
250 million units

The institutional learning gleaned from its first foray into boys action on Beyblade served Nelvana extremely well when it embarked in 2006 on a similar property-build with Canadian toyco Spin Master and Japan's Sega and TMS on Bakugan. Based around a Japanese toy line, also with strong collectibility and battling hooks, Bakugan was developed by the four partners as an expanded consumer products program and an animated series. Nelvana and Spin Master are in the driver's seat outside of Japan and Asia, with Cartoon Network doing triple-duty as broadcaster, licensing agent and home entertainment partner everywhere but Canada.

Now in its fourth season as an animated series (189 x half hours), *Bakugan* is airing in Canada on TELETOON, Stateside on Cartoon Network and in 50 other territories worldwide. After *Transformers* and *Star Wars*, Bakugan was the third best-selling action figure line in 2010, winning TOTY Awards for Boys Toy of the Year and Property of

the Year. Spin Master has shipped upwards of 250 million of the transformative balls to date, and roughly 125 million of these have sold through in the US alone. More than 45 licensees are contributing to Bakugan's North American licensing program, with merch on shelves in all major retailers, including Target, Walmart and Toys 'R' Us.

It would be all too easy to be blinded by these two back-to-back hits in the boys space and overlook Nelvana's more regional consumer products achievements, but that would be a mistake.

"One thing we're very good at is recognizing that a regional hit can be hugely lucrative," says Murphy. "Just because something doesn't work in the US doesn't mean we can't have a nice return on the business if we focus our efforts on certain marketplaces." A good example is *Babar*. Building on 80 years of home-turf heritage, Nelvana has concentrated most of its L&M efforts for the property in France, building out a full-bodied merch program that encompasses a roster of 50 local licensees. The French program is also bound to get a big boost when publisher Hachette starts releasing a brand-new line of 50 to 60 books starting this month.

With its consumer products business contributing more significantly, Nelvana is shifting focus back to content with a diversification initiative that will see the studio get into live action more deeply.



Sheridan is pleased and proud to
have played a part in your success.

Mar 9, 2009

The world's favorite elephant to be made over as 26-ep CGI series *Babar and the Adventures of Badou*, in partnership with France's TeamTO

Jun 3, 2009

Nelvana Enterprises and Cartoon Network Enterprises win Overall Best Licensed Program of the Year with Bakugan, and Spin Master wins Best TV, Film and Entertainment Hard Goods License of the Year at the International Licensing Industry Merchandisers Association (LIMA) Awards

Feb 2010

More TIA wins for Bakugan—this time it's Boys Toy of the Year and Property of the Year

CONGRATULATIONS!

NELVANA

ON 40
MEMORABLE
YEARS

HAPPY
BIRTHDAY!



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A Kidscreen Advertising Tribute

Although Nelvana has produced live-action series such as *The Edison Twins* in the past, it's now approaching the genre strategically. Principal photography began in February on *Life with Boys*, a sitcom about a girl living in a world dominated by menfolk—namely, her overprotective widowed father and three brothers. The show was created by *Hannah Montana* executive producer Michael Poyres, and will air on YTV in Canada this fall, with Nelvana and New York's Classic Media splitting up distribution to the rest of the world.

Beyond simply producing the show, Nelvana's broader goal is to start developing a stronger sitcom expertise in Canada, learning the ropes from veterans in the format, such as Poyres. "We're hoping that having our local crews and actors work with someone like him will help us build for sitcoms playing a bigger part of Canada's future business," says Jocelyn Hamilton, Corus VP of original programming, kids, comedy and drama. "The aim on *Life with Boys* is to do one sitcom and really get it right."

Joining *Life with Boys* in the company's growing live-action catalogue is *Mr. Young*, a Thunderbird Films production in association with YTV that Nelvana will distribute worldwide and jointly sell in the US with Thunderbird. Created by *Suite Life* writer/producer

Dan Signer, *Mr. Young* launched last month on YTV and was the channel's top-rated Canadian program after just two weeks on air. Next up on the studio's non-animated slate is a live-actioner based on The Hardy Boys book series that's currently in development.

"Right now, what's working in the broadcast world globally is co-viewing: parents and kids watching shows together," says Murphy. "Both live action and animated comedies get at that really well, so we're focusing on developing strong offerings in both streams." Nelvana's newest comedy toon is *Scaredy Squirrel*, which is due to launch April 3 in a prime Sunday morning slot on YTV. The squash-and-stretch show is based on a neurotic, agoraphobic, conspiracy-theorist squirrel who comes up with elaborate and imaginative schemes to work around his fears and enjoy the finer things in life. It is based on a best-selling Kids Can Press books series by Canadian author Melanie Watt. Another strong performer in this corner of Nelvana's library is *Spliced*, an original production for TELETOON that launched last April and had become the channel's number-two show by fall.

In terms of broadcast reach, Corus plans to continue to grow this part of its kids business globally, which would naturally be a big boon for Nelvana's content



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Aug 3, 2010

Nelvana and The Clifford Ross Company lock down Marty Bowen and Wyck Godfrey (the producers of the *Twilight* Saga) to develop a *Babar* feature film

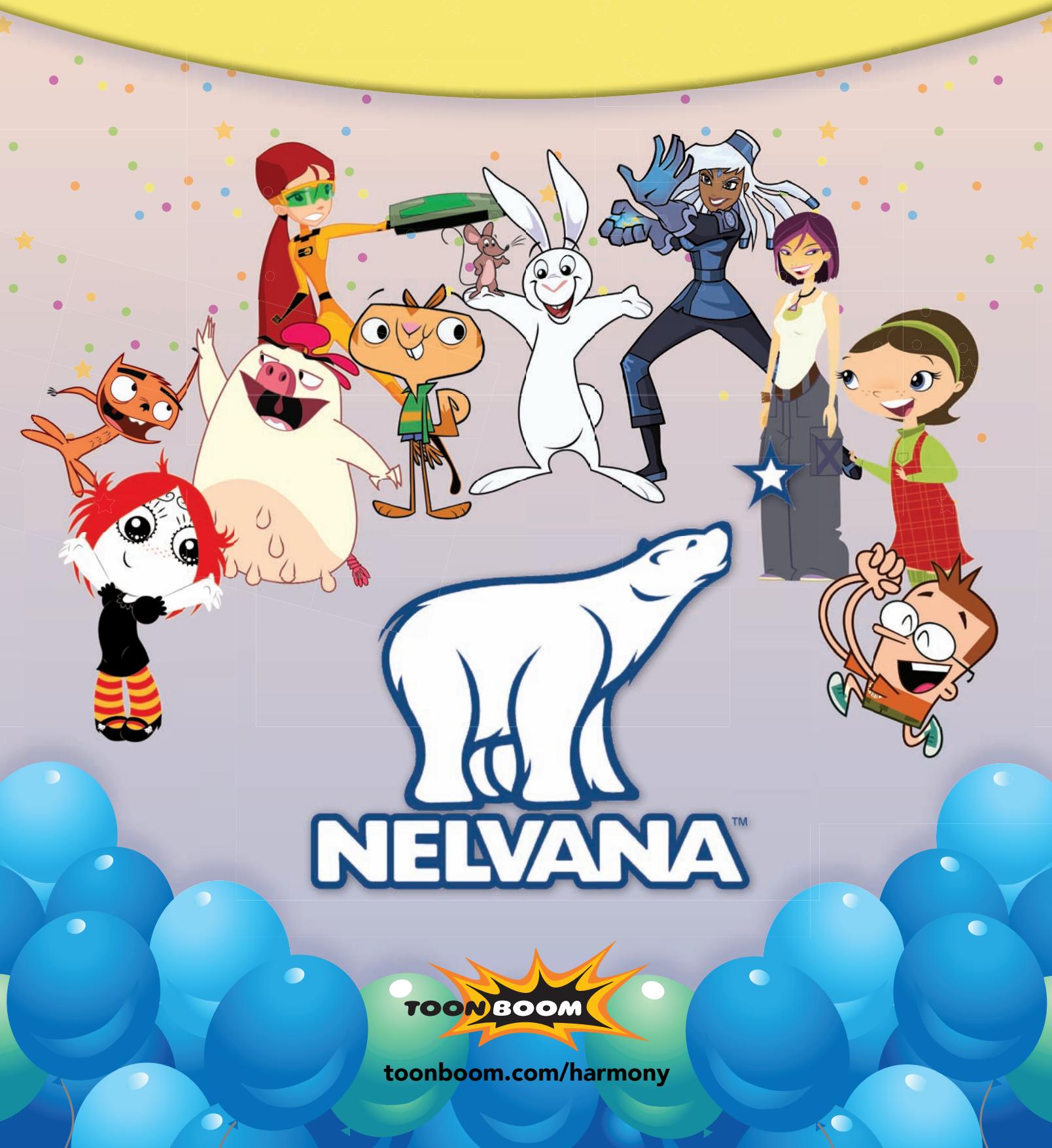
Sep 7, 2010

Nelvana partners with HIT Entertainment on *Mike the Knight*, a hotly anticipated CGI preschool series created by Alexander Bar (*Lunar Jim*) and written by Marc Seal (*Bob the Builder*)

Sep 16, 2010

Babar and the Adventures of Badou lands on Playhouse Disney for its US debut

Toon Boom Congratulates Nelvana on 40 Years of Canadian Magic!





A Kidscreen Advertising Tribute

library and pipeline. So far, the company has partnered on two international channel ventures over the past 10 years. The first is qubo, an American kids channel co-owned with NBC Universal, ION Media and Scholastic that distributes educational and entertainment series to more than 40 million homes. The second is KidsCo, a 24/7 multi-platform channel that launched in 2007 and has already rolled out in 151 international territories. It was created in partnership with NBC Universal and Cookie Jar and airs shows from all three companies' libraries, including 4,000 hours of Nelvana content.

Looking more than a year into the future, the growth plan for Nelvana echoes the company's aspirations when it first opened its doors back in the late 1970s: working with a mix of homegrown and international creative talent to bring enduring characters to audiences globally. Here's to another 40 years of doing exactly that! ★



Mr. Young the most recent addition to Nelvana's live-action library

Dec 10, 2010

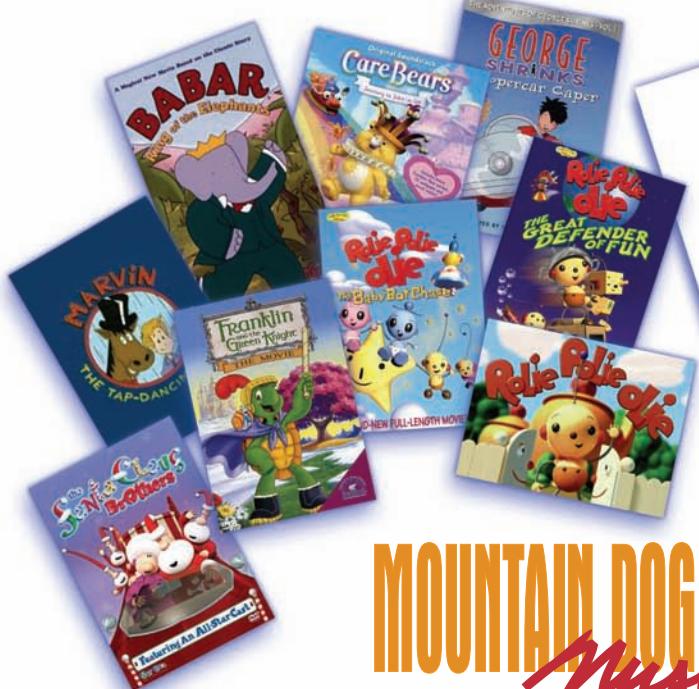
Newly relaunched Beyblade toys sell 500,000 units and top the toy sales charts in Germany, with support from the animated series by Nelvana and d-rights on Nickelodeon Germany

Feb 22, 2011

Nelvana starts principal photography on live-action comedy series *Life with Boys*, created by *Hannah Montana* mastermind Michael Poryes

Thank you for the wonderful opportunities you've given me to be a part of your success. Your commitment to excellence and true passion are an everlasting inspiration. Congratulations on a fantastic run. Here's to 40 more years of tomorrow.

Carl Lenox



CELEBRATE

piano play 18th's EMAH

HEY EV'RY BO-DO LET'S GET TO GETH ER CELEBRATE THE STORY OF A

A/C I WAN NA SING A SONG 'BOUT THE

SU-PER COOL TEAM C7US YEAH

E/B PEOPLE WE CALL NEL-VAN-A YEAH

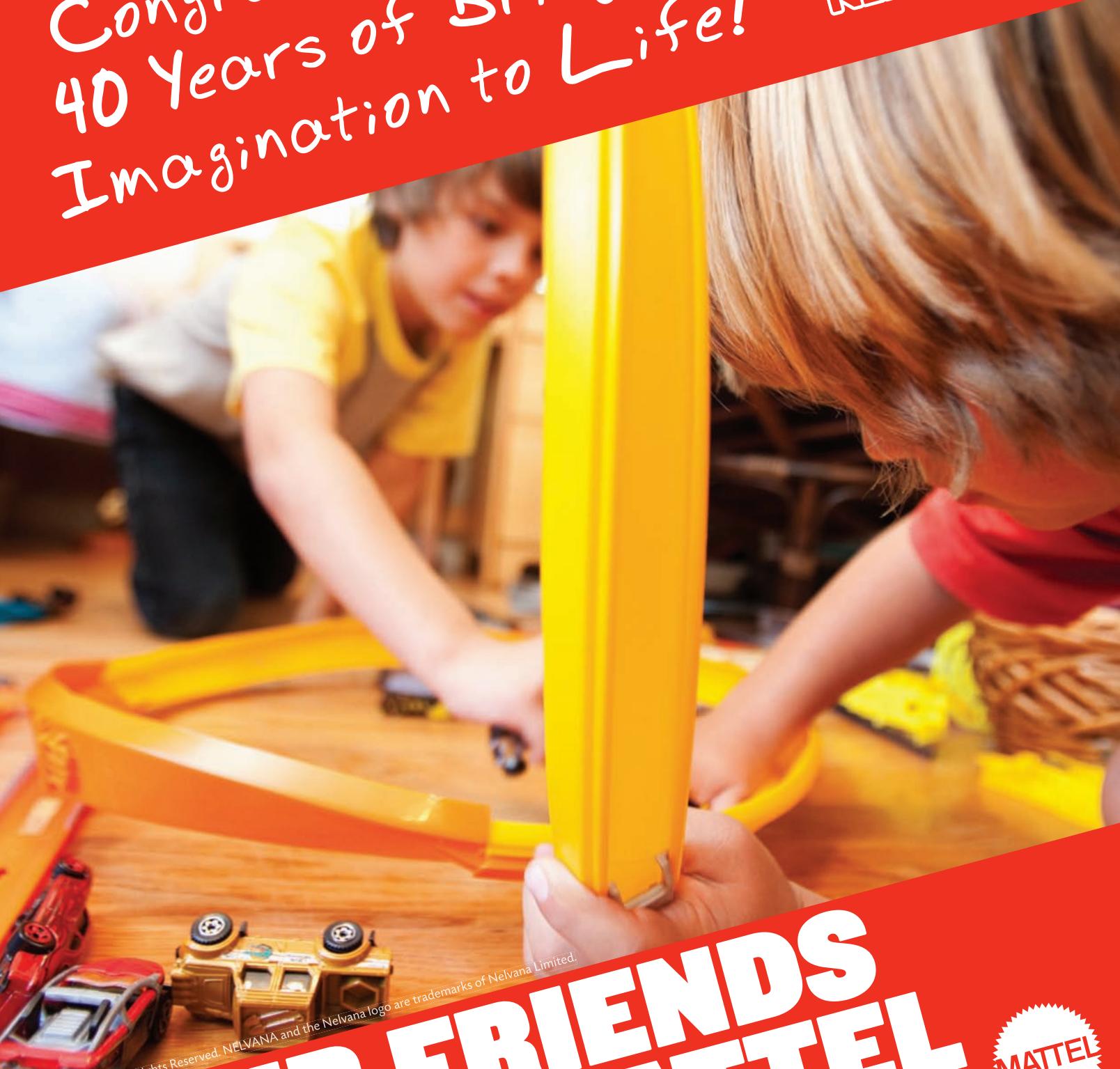
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**YOUR FRIENDS
AT MATTEL**



Outtakes

Bits too good to leave out of the book

Wet dreams, periods, spontaneous erections, zits, B.O. and boobs.

I was called the **Justin Bieber** of TV yesterday. **No retailer** has ever walked in and said, **“I can’t wait until you raise your prices!”** It’s about **boogies, farts** and all the gross stuff the average eight- to 12-year-old boy finds hysterical—and sadly, **so do I** still.

So the idea was to have a character that would have android assistants and I could potentially blow them up without worrying.

● Red Kite's **Ken Anderson** on the subjects explored in new tween-targeted web series *Ask Lara*.

● **Noah Jones**, creator of new toon *Fish Hooks*, talking about his sudden popularity after being discovered by Disney.

● Funrise Toy Company CEO **Arnie Rubin** when asked how retailers will react to looming price hikes coming out of China.

● Impossible Kids' **Karl Woolley** relating just what it is about *Fleabag Monkeyface* that drew him to the new series.

● **J.J. Johnson** on how science series *Anne's Droids* works around concerns that kids might try the cool experiments at home.

They are coming...

MONSTROZ

The new
era has
begun !

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